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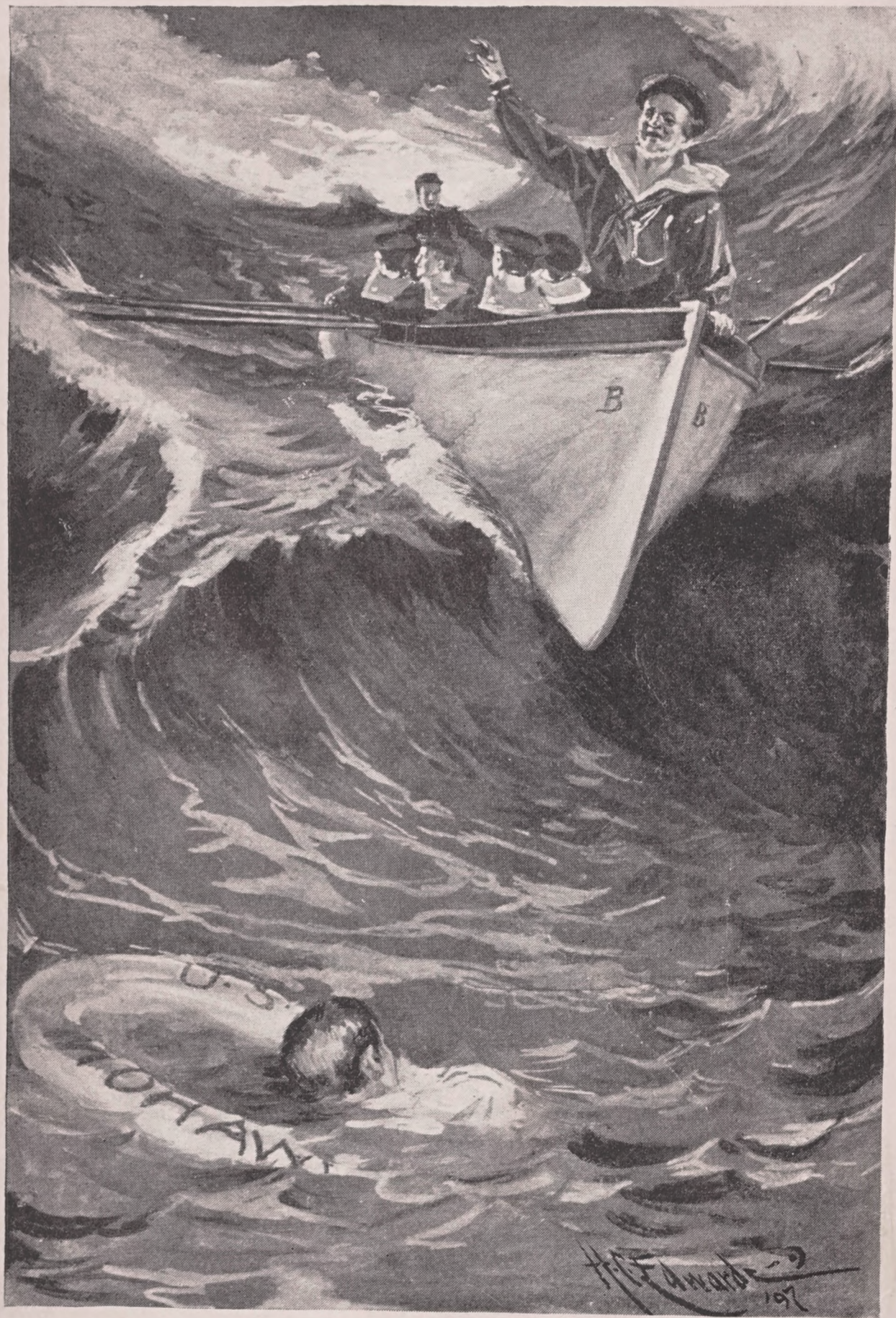


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THE
LAST CRUISE OF THE MOHAWK



HIS CRIES GUIDED THE YOUNG OFFICER TO THE SPOT.

THE LAST CRUISE OF THE MOHAWK

*A BOY'S ADVENTURES IN THE NAVY IN
THE WAR OF THE REBELLION*

BY
W. J. HENDERSON

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY EDWARDS



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TO
BRANDER MATTHEWS

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THE LAST CRUISE OF THE MOHAWK

CHAPTER I

A NOCTURNAL SMOKING-PARTY

IT was a dark night, with a dash of rain in the air. The northeast wind moaned dismally around the corners of the old Tuzo School, and whistled through the branches of the trees outside, making them sway and bend and rattle vigorously. If the Tuzo School had been down at Sancet, near the waters that lashed the shores of old Cape Cod, the breaking of the surf would have added its double bass to the harmony of the night. That was the sound which Johnny Rodgers missed as he undressed to go to bed after a day of hard study.

"When it blows," he said to himself, "I like to hear the sea. That makes me feel more at home, and I can sleep better. But I suppose I'm tired enough to do without rocking to-night. Anyhow, here goes."

So saying, Johnny blew out the candle, which was the sole illumination of his little chamber up in the mansard roof, and sprang into bed. He was a hardy, well-built, and healthy boy, but for some time he lay awake, thinking more intently than usual over the events of the day. He was just a little nervous, and he did not know it. He had studied hard and had fairly mastered some pretty stiff lessons, but he could not help seeing that, no matter how hard he worked, or how well he played at the games common to the school, he was not held in high esteem by the ruling set, of which Morton Brewer was the head. Johnny had not any mother to go to with his troubles, and sometimes he was thoroughly disheartened. He had read a good deal in the papers about the great war that was going on between the North and the South, and sometimes he felt as if he would like to go and fight, too. Presently he drifted off into a light sleep and dreamed that he was a drummer-boy.

“Who’s that?”

Johnny sat bolt upright in bed and spoke in a loud voice.

“‘Sh! No one’s going to hurt you,” came the reply.

Johnny was now thoroughly awake, for he

had not been asleep long. He saw that his window had been opened from the outside and that a boy was just in the act of climbing in. Another boy followed, and then the window was cautiously closed again.

"What do you fellows want?" asked Johnny, who was not a little alarmed by this uncere-
monious entry into his room.

"You keep quiet, Snooks," replied a voice which Johnny at once recognized as that of Morton Brewer, son of his guardian, Hiram Brewer.

"We ain't going to do you any harm," said Morton.

"Well, but why have you come?" demanded Johnny.

"Now, youngster," replied Morton, who was three years older than Johnny, "my friend, Frank Betts, and myself have done you the honor to pay you this evening call in order that we may have a quiet smoke in your palatial apartment."

"But that is not fair," said Johnny; "suppose a teacher smells the smoke."

"Then, my dear young friend," said Morton, who did all the talking for himself and his friend, "you will have to explain the presence of the smoke in your room."

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“And you?”

“We shall return to our own boudoirs by yonder airy path.” And Morton waved his hand gracefully toward the window. The two boys had climbed out of the window of Frank’s room, which was near the other end of the building, and had walked along the rain-gutter to Johnny’s window. It was a dangerous thing to do, for the mansard roof, in which their rooms were, was thirty feet above the campus, and the rain gutter, like everything else about the Tuzo School, was old and untrustworthy. But the schoolboys of the Tuzo institution were no more distinguished for wisdom than those of other schools, and were always doing things that were dangerous.

Johnny Rodgers, who was a strong and hardy boy of fifteen, had done risky things himself, but never for the sake of smoking in another’s room. If Johnny had wished to indulge secretly in the foolish practice of smoking, he would have taken all the risks on his own shoulders. But Morton Brewer had always bullied Johnny. When Johnny’s father had died, the boy had been left to the guardianship of Hiram Brewer, his father’s lawyer. Johnny’s mother had passed away a year later, and the little fellow was an orphan. It

was well known that his father had left a considerable sum of money in trust for the boy, to be paid to him on his twenty-first birthday. But no one would have supposed that Johnny was the heir to a large fortune. Hiram Brewer was mean and close, and he kept Johnny on very short allowance. The boy had poor clothes, poor shoes, and poor hats. Indeed he looked like the child of poverty. Every one wondered when Hiram Brewer sent him to the Tuzo School, which was only five miles away from Sancet, his home. But the wonder ceased when it was learned that Johnny had been sent there on a scholarship for orphans, so that, in spite of his reputed wealth, he figured as a sort of charity scholar. That made some of the other boys, especially those in Morton Brewer's set, look down on him. If Johnny had been a little older, he would have seen that the better class of fellows esteemed him for his own personal character. He had heard rumors that Hiram Brewer was using his money in speculations, but the boy had no way of ascertaining the facts, and felt that he was at his guardian's mercy.

Morton Brewer, a young man of eighteen, was the "swell" of the Tuzo School. He al-

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ways had his pockets filled with money, wore fine clothes, and had a horse to ride. He boarded at the school because his mother was an invalid and it was thought that his presence in the house added to the excitement of her nerves. She did not live long to keep him out of the house. We shall not hear of her again in this story. Long before it has reached the point at which Hiram Brewer finds the most trouble, she will have gone to sleep under the willow-trees in Sancet church-yard. Perhaps it would have been better for Morton if she had been a stronger mother.

Her amiable son was sitting in the only large chair in Johnny Rodgers's small room. After seating himself in it, he produced a cigar-case and handing a "weed," as he called it, to Frank Betts, took one himself. They lit up and sat puffing their "weeds" in silence. Johnny still sat up in bed and wondered what he ought to do. He was burning with anger and wished that he were big enough to thrash Morton and Frank. But he felt that he was really helpless. The rain had increased and the wind was rising.

"Pretty comfortable, I should say," remarked Morton.

"Rather," said Frank Betts; "it's quite a

convenient thing for us all that we have the Snooks here to keep open house for us."

"I'll have a lock put on that window tomorrow," said Johnny.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," said Frank.

"No, my blooming cherub," said Morton, "it would only drive us to the unpleasant necessity of cutting out a pane of glass with my diamond pin the next time we wished to enter. Diamonds are very useful for cutting glass. You don't wear them yourself, I believe, do you?"

"No, I don't," said Johnny, "but I could if I had my money."

"That is a pleasing fiction, my son," rejoined Frank, "about your having money."

"Well, I haven't possession of it," replied Johnny, "but Morton knows that his father has money of mine, left me by my father."

"A small sum, I am informed," said Morton, airily, blowing a whiff of smoke in Johnny's face.

"No, a good deal," said Johnny, stoutly, "and some day I mean to have it, and then I guess you'll not put on so many airs with me, Morton Brewer, for money is the only thing that counts with you. You aren't capable of understanding anything else."

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"I understand that you are a very impertinent youngster," answered Morton, angrily, "and if you don't speak a little more carefully I'll teach you a lesson."

"You can't teach me anything," declared Johnny; "you don't know enough."

Morton sprang to his feet and pulled Johnny out of bed. Then, while Frank held the boy, Morton poured the contents of the water pitcher over his head.

"There," he said, "I fancy that will cool you down a little."

"Hark!" exclaimed Frank in a whisper, "I hear some one moving in the corridor."

Morton at once started for the window and climbed out, Frank following him. They had hardly closed the sash behind them before there was a sharp rap at Johnny's door.

CHAPTER II

A FRUITLESS CROSS-EXAMINATION

"WHO'S there?" demanded the boy.

"Open your door at once," came the answer, in stern tones.

Johnny recognized the voice of Mr. Harding, the teacher who slept on that floor, but in order to gain a little time while thinking what he ought to do, he said :

"Who are you, anyhow?"

"You know quite well who I am ; open the door."

Johnny realized that any further hesitation would serve only to make matters worse. So with a palpitating heart he went and opened the door. There stood Mr. Harding, with a lamp in his hand. The light immediately showed that the room was blue with tobacco-smoke, and Johnny was amazed at the thickness of it.

"Well, sir?" exclaimed Mr. Harding.

"Well, sir?" repeated Johnny, weakly.

"Don't repeat my words, sir!" cried the irate teacher.

"No, sir," said the boy, meekly.

Doors began to open along the corridor and heads to peer out. The other boys on the floor had heard Mr. Harding's rap and demand for admittance, and they were on the alert to see who was in trouble and what kind of trouble it was. There was no doubt about the kind of trouble, for the odor of tobacco-smoke now filled the entire corridor. If Johnny could have seen clear to the other end of the hall, he would have detected Morton Brewer and Frank Betts in the act of peering out of the latter's door to ascertain what he was going to say.

"So, sir," said Mr. Harding, "you've been smoking, eh?"

"No, sir, I haven't," answered Johnny, suddenly finding his courage again.

"What! Do you dare to deny it?"

"Yes, sir, I do deny it," exclaimed Johnny.

"Little beggar," whispered Morton to Frank, "if he tells on us, we'll make the school too hot to hold him."

"I don't believe he'll dare to tell," said Frank; "he's not in very good favor now, and you know how strong the feeling is against peaching."

"Yes, I know that well enough," replied Morton, "but he hasn't any love for me."

"Listen!" said Frank.

Mr. Harding had been standing silent with amazement at Johnny's apparent audacity in denying a charge which seemed to be already proved; but now he found his voice again and said:

"Why, you impudent boy, your room is full of smoke."

"I know it is, sir," answered Johnny.

"Do you deny that it is tobacco-smoke?"

"No, sir, there's no use of trying to deny that."

"I suppose you don't expect me to believe that it blew in at the window, do you?"

Johnny started, for that was a pretty close guess at the real state of affairs, but he said:

"No, sir, I don't expect you to believe anything I say."

"But you intend to deny that you have been smoking?"

"Yes, sir, I've got to; I didn't smoke, and I can't say I did."

Morton nudged Frank down at the other end of the hall, and whispered:

"The young wretch is going to tell!"

"No," said Frank, "I still don't believe that he will dare to do it."

"Then, sir," said Mr. Harding, while the boys at the various doors craned their necks and listened intently, "I am to understand that some one else has been smoking in your room."

"Yes, sir," said Johnny, "that's the case."

"But do you not know that you are almost as much to blame for inviting others to smoke in your room as if you had done it yourself."

"But I didn't invite them, sir."

"Well, at any rate, you allowed it."

"But I did not wish to allow it, Mr. Harding."

"What do you mean?"

"I couldn't prevent it."

"Why not?"

"Well, sir, there were two of them, and they came in and said they intended to enjoy a quiet smoke in my room, and they would make it pretty lively for me if I didn't keep quiet. But I didn't keep *very* quiet, sir. I told them what I thought of them."

Mr. Harding was silent for a few moments as if pondering the probability of the boy's story. Then he suddenly noticed for the first time the condition of Johnny's hair.

"Why," he exclaimed, "your hair is all wet. I believe you've been smoking and have made

yourself sick, and have been pouring water on your head to give yourself relief."

Frank dug his elbow into Morton's ribs, as they stood together down the hall, and said :

"Lucky thing we doused young hopeful's head for him."

"Yes," replied Morton, "I don't see just how he's going to get over that piece of circumstantial evidence."

As for Johnny, he was dumfounded by this new and disastrous turn of affairs. He stood looking hopelessly at Mr. Harding, and repeated, in a dull, mechanical way :

"I haven't been smoking, sir."

"Let me see your hands," said Mr. Harding, suddenly inspired with a brilliant idea. The boy held up his hands, and the teacher carefully examined them in the hopes of finding nicotine stains on them. If such stains had been there they would have condemned Johnny at once and beyond all hope ; but Mr. Harding argued, and with considerable justice, that their absence did not prove that the boy was innocent. Johnny might have smoked with a cigar-holder, and that would have left his hands free from stain.

"That will do, sir," said Mr. Harding. "Now I am going to search your room for ci-

gar-stumps. I fancy that you can't smoke more than one cigar in an evening yet, and if I find more than one stump, I shall be prepared to believe that others have been smoking in this room, but I do not know that I shall be ready to hold you guiltless."

If the situation had not been so serious for Johnny, he would probably have seen the humorous side of it now. He knew that Morton and Frank had thrown the stumps of their cigars down the rain spout as they passed out of the window. Mr. Harding industriously searched the room. He pulled out drawers and trunks, washstand and bureau, turned over chairs, and even went down on his hands and knees to peer under the bed. It is needless to say that he found no cigar-stumps.

"What became of the cigar-stumps?" he demanded, angrily.

"They went out of the window," said Johnny, speaking with the greatest accuracy.

"Do you still insist that others did the smoking here?"

"Yes, sir, and very much against my wishes too."

"Who were they?"

Morton and Frank, as well as all the other listeners, leaned forward anxiously.

"I can't tell you that, sir," said Johnny. The listeners all looked relieved.

"Why not? Do you not know who they were?"

"Yes, sir," replied Johnny, "I know who they were; but I do not wish to tell on them."

"Then I shall be forced to believe that you yourself were one of the guilty persons."

"I don't see why, Mr. Harding. I give you my word that I have not been smoking."

"I don't believe you."

The boy's face flushed and he bit his lips, but he replied, stoutly:

"I am very sorry that you refuse to believe me, sir; but I shall certainly not tell on the fellows who came in here and smoked."

"Mr. Durand will attend to your case in the morning. Go to bed." Mr. Harding closed the door and left Johnny to such dreams as might visit him after such an exciting evening.

CHAPTER III

TWO PRECIOUS PAIRS

EUPHRASTUS DURAND was precisely the kind of man to make a distinguished failure as the principal of a school. He was a whole-souled worshipper of the golden calf. If he had had his own way he would have put all the rich men's sons at the heads of their classes and let the poor ones bring up the rear.

"Isn't it that way all over the world?" he would say to his wife. "Look at the Senate of the United States. Are there any laboring men there? Who own the railways, the steamship lines, the great factories, the palatial stores? The poor men? No! The rich! The rich are the smart, the brainy, the talented. Then how on earth can anyone expect so humble a person as I to keep them down? Far be it from me to attempt to interfere with the order of nature."

And Mrs. Mehitabel Durand, who had never known anything except how to cook, wash, and sweep, and had never indulged in the foolish

extravagance of an original idea, listened to her husband with the reverence that was due to a man who was permitted by Harvard to hang A.M. after his name. But pretty nearly any boy that has ever taken the liberty of thinking for himself will readily come to the conclusion that under the management of such a man the Tuzo School must have been a peculiar institution. To be sure there was one teacher who strove to inculcate ideas of manliness, purity, bravery and honor, but he was not popular with the ruling set in the school.

Let no reader of this story misunderstand me. I am not crying down riches, nor those that possess them. Some of the truest and best young men I have ever known have been sons of wealthy parents and themselves possessed of large fortunes. But they had been taught to understand the difference between money and its owners, and they knew that a man might be a coward and no gentleman, even though he had \$30,000 a year. The trouble with the Tuzo School was that Mr. Durand's reverence for wealth had undermined its moral constitution, and had made the majority of the boys a set of toadies to the rich few. Athletics had not been developed in those days, or such a condition could not have existed. To-day

the fellow who shows skill, pluck and endurance on the track, in the boat, or on the football field, is sure to be admired, no matter whether he is rich or poor. Courage, resolution, and quickness of wit are fine traits of manhood, and the school that holds in high esteem their display in sports is, consciously or unconsciously, worshipping character.

But let us return to Mr. Durand. A man with his regard for wealth could not be expected to have a very deep affection for a boy who was a sort of charity pupil. He knew that Johnny Rodgers was said to have money somewhere, but he saw no evidence of it. On the other hand, he did see that Mr. Brewer treated the boy as of no importance whatever. Now it was not at all likely in these circumstances that Mr. Durand would patiently investigate any charge of misconduct against Johnny. The morning after the nocturnal smoking-party, while the boys were in the school-room at their "study hour," Mr. Harding knocked at the door of Mr. Durand's sitting-room in the main building.

"Come in," came the answer in an oily voice.

"Good-morning, sir," said Mr. Harding, as he softly closed the door behind him; "I am

come, sir, to report a sad breach of discipline which occurred on my floor last night."

"I am very sorry to hear that such a thing has happened, Mr. Harding," said Mr. Durand, in his most caressing tones; "I fear that you must have relaxed momentarily that vigilance which has always been one of your most valuable qualifications for the calling of a teacher."

"I think, sir, that you will acquit me on that ground when you have heard my story."

"Ah, true; I have not heard it yet. Sit down, Mr. Harding, pray sit down, and speak freely."

"I acted the moment evidence of disorder reached me, sir, and I am sure——"

"Let me have the story, my dear sir," said Mr. Durand, in a honeyed tone, "and then I can judge for myself."

Mr. Harding proceeded to tell the story of the previous night, as it had presented itself to him, with the greatest attention to details. It must be confessed that it made a very bad outlook for Johnny.

"Dear, dear, dear!" exclaimed Mr. Durand, rubbing his hands together with an air of satisfaction that belied his words, "this is indeed a sad case. You are sure that it was tobacco-smoke?"

"Perfectly, sir. I ought to know tobacco-smoke when I smell it, I think. That is—of course—I do not smoke myself, but I have been in the presence of those who did and I remember the nature of the odor."

"Precisely, precisely," said Mr. Durand, nodding his approbation. "It is, indeed, strange that I should have looked with distrust upon that boy ever since his first appearance here."

Mr. Durand neglected to say that he looked with distrust upon all boys who seemed to have little money.

"His guardian, Mr. Hiram Brewer, a most estimable gentleman," continued Mr. Durand, smiling with pleasure at the remembrance of so distinguished a patron, "has also displayed a keen insight into the character of the lad, and has convinced me that he has but little hope for his future. And so he resorted to the weak subterfuge of accusing others, did he?"

"Yes, sir," answered Mr. Harding, with becoming solemnity.

"And you were unable to discover any evidence that others had been in his room?"

"No evidence whatever, Mr. Durand."

"Of course, of course," said the principal, pursing up his lips and looking mighty wise; "if there had been others a boy of so little

character would instantly have revealed their names in the hope of escaping punishment. I thank you, Mr. Harding, for your succinct and comprehensive account of this unhappy affair. Rest assured, sir, that the dignity of the Tuzo School and the authority of its instructors shall be upheld."

"Of that, sir, I have never presumed to entertain a moment's doubt."

Then these two polished and gentle-tongued shams arose and bowed most profoundly to one another. Mr. Durand, with great impressiveness, opened the door for Mr. Harding, and without so much as the glance of an eye to indicate that he doubted the outcome of the affair, the teacher solemnly passed from the presence of his principal. A few minutes later the boys went tumbling uproariously down the stairs from the school-room, and rushed shouting into the campus. They had half an hour between study-hour and the beginning of the morning session of school, and they all were eager to make the most of it. Morton Brewer and Frank Betts sat down on a rustic seat under one of the trees.

"What do you suppose old Durand will do to young hopeful when he hears of last night's smoking spree?" asked Betts.

"I'm blest if I know," said Morton, "and, what's more, I don't know any reason why I should care."

"Well, it would be sort of rough if he gave the youngster a thrashing for something he didn't do."

"Think so? Well, I'll wager it's no more than he deserves for some one of his pranks that hasn't been found out."

"Well, as for that, my lad, I don't see that either you or I have been paid our just debts."

"What are you talking about, Frank? You don't suppose old Durand would undertake to whip us for anything, do you?"

"No, of course, I don't mean that. We're too big, and besides you know old D. wouldn't dream of— Hello!"

This sudden exclamation was caused by the fact that Johnny Rodgers had come up to the two chums and addressed them.

"What do you want?" asked Morton, shortly.

"Look here, Morton," said Johnny, "what are you going to do about last night?"

"Do about it? Why, what should I do about it?"

"You know Mr. Harding came to my room and found it full of smoke, don't you?"

"Suppose I do know it; what then?"

"Well, you must know that I stand to be punished for what you did. You know perfectly well that I didn't tell on you."

"Of course, you didn't," said Morton, with a sneer; "and a good job, too. You don't imagine that Mr. Harding would have believed you if you had, do you?"

"Not unless you had admitted it," said Johnny; "but that's not the question."

"Well, what is the question, young wise-acre?"

"Are you going to let me take your punishment, or are you going to clear me!"

"Clear you? How? By telling on ourselves? Well, I like your impudence."

"Hold on, Morton," said Frank, "the youngster isn't so far off. If we confess, old Durand will let us off."

"Confess nothing! He won't do anything much to the boy, and I'm not going to tell on myself, I assure you. I'm no such fool."

"Very well," said Johnny, seeing that Betts would do as Morton did, "I'll not tell on you, but I'll not take your punishment, either."

"I don't see how you're going to escape it," said Morton.

"That's my business," said Johnny, shortly;

“but I tell you one thing, Morton; you’ll live to be sorry for this.”

“What? You mean that for a threat?”

“No, it’s no threat. But I’m sure that some day you’ll be sorry, Morton, and when you are, just remember that I said you would be.”

And Johnny stuck his hands deep down into his pockets and walked away. Mr. Durand, standing on the school-house steps, gazed thoughtfully at the boy, and muttered:

“Yes, that’s the plan. I’ll do it.”

CHAPTER IV

SCHOOL-BOY HONOR AND ITS REWARD

A FEW minutes later the whole school assembled in the large school-room in obedience to the summons of the cracked bell. Johnny went to his seat with a bosom full of conflicting emotions. He was bound by every law of school-boy honor not to tell on the two offenders. What a pity it is that school-boy "honor" is not a little more strict in its demand that an offender shall confess! It seems to be a little mixed, that school-boy honor. However, all that Johnny could do in the circumstances was to hold his tongue. He looked with some anxiety at the solemn countenances of the teachers, and waited uneasily for further developments. The morning session opened with reading of the Bible and prayer, and immediately after that the classes went to their various rooms to recite the first lessons of the day. But on this particular morning, when the prayer was completed, Mr. Durand rapped for silence and addressed the school.

"I regret," he said, "that an unfortunate affair of last night requires immediate attention."

A sudden hush fell upon the room, and Johnny's heart began to beat fast.

"The habit of smoking," continued Mr. Durand, "is most pernicious in the young and should be prevented at all hazards. To my great pain—I will not add surprise, for I am not so much surprised as pained—one of the most faithful and accomplished of my coadjutors, last night, detected one of the pupils of this school in the act of smoking in his room."

There was a stir of surprise at this way of putting the case, but Mr. Durand continued:

"It becomes my painful duty to publicly punish the offender, to the end that such a breach of discipline may not occur again. You may or may not be aware that one object of criminal punishment is the prevention of offence by others. I trust that in making an example of the present offender, I may succeed in convincing the rest of you that it will be well to avoid smoking in the Tuzo School in the future."

Mr. Durand paused for a moment to note the effect of his words, and then, in his most gentle and caressing tone, said:

"John Rodgers, please advance to the front."

Johnny arose and walked to the space be-

tween the front row of desks and the platform on which the teachers sat, and stood there, calmly looking the principal in the eye. There was no swagger or impudence in the boy's manner. He looked what he was—a boy conscious of his own innocence, and if Mr. Durand had not felt that he was obliged to play a false part, he could not have helped being struck by the boy's air. Morton Brewer and Frank Betts sat intently gazing at their victim, and the rest of the school felt that something unusual was about to happen.

"John Rodgers," said Mr. Durand, "I am told by Mr. Harding that he entered your room last night and found the atmosphere surcharged with tobacco-smoke."

"That is true, Mr. Durand," said Johnny, respectfully.

"Of course it is true, sir," said the principal, with a sudden assumption of severity. "Anything that Mr. Harding says is true."

Mr. Durand turned and bowed ceremoniously to Mr. Harding, and that eminent instructor arose and returned the bow with equal state. When this function had come to an end, Johnny ventured to speak again.

"I only meant, sir," he said, "that I didn't deny it."

"Denial would be quite absurd," said Mr. Durand; "Mr. Harding can both see and smell, and he did so."

Morton Brewer could not repress a low gurgle of laughter at this speech. Mr. Durand gazed around the school-room, but seeing every eye intently fixed on him, cleared his throat and proceeded.

"Now, sir, tobacco-smoke could not be present in your room unless some one had been smoking."

Again Mr. Durand paused to let the wisdom of his remarks force itself upon the attention of his listeners.

"No, sir," said Johnny.

"I am of the opinion, judging by what Mr. Harding has told me, that the smoker on this occasion was none other than yourself."

"I told Mr. Harding, last night, sir," said Johnny, "that I did not do it."

"Did you expect Mr. Harding to believe that the smoke grew of its own accord?"

"No, sir, of course not. I admitted that smoking had been going on in my room."

"And you accused others of doing it."

"That's the truth, sir. Two boys smoked in my room."

"Who were they?"

"Mr. Durand," said Johnny, "I refused to tell last night, and I am not going to change my mind now."

"Well, sir," said the principal, solemnly, "I am forced to say that I believe your accusation of others to be a mere subterfuge, and that you yourself are guilty."

"I am not," said the boy, stoutly, "and if the two fellows that are weren't a pair of the most contemptible cowards I ever saw, they'd get up and prove it."

A dead silence followed this speech. Some of the boys began to sympathize with Johnny and to feel with him that the real offenders ought to admit their guilt. Still these same boys would have thought it very dishonorable of Johnny to tell. As for Mr. Durand, he rolled up his eyes in horror at what he chose to regard as unparalleled impudence.

"You see that no one comes forward to take the burden of your guilt from you," said the principal. "It therefore becomes my painful duty to apply the punishment."

All the boys and even the teachers leaned forward eagerly to see what was coming next. Mr. Durand, with an air of mystery, thrust his hand into his breast pocket and drew slowly therefrom a large, black cigar.

"My sentence is," he said, in a voice that was simply an impressive whisper, "that Johnny Rodgers shall smoke this in the presence of the entire school."

A good many of the boys tittered, and two or three laughed outright, for it seemed to them that Mr. Durand's purpose was simply to make Johnny appear ridiculous in their eyes. But Morton Brewer nudged Frank Betts and said:

"It'll make him so sick he'll wish he was dead."

Johnny had no knowledge of smoking, and he thought it would be an easy punishment. Mr. Durand cut the end off the cigar and handed it to the boy, who held it awkwardly and began to look a little uncomfortable.

"Place it in your mouth," said the principal, "and then I shall have the honor to give you a light."

Suppressed laughter now ran all around the room and Johnny's cheeks began to burn. But he obeyed the order and Mr. Durand handed him a lighted match. Johnny went about his task as he had seen others do it, but the first whiff of smoke poured into his throat and caused him to choke and cough painfully.

"Please, Mr. Durand," he said, "I've never smoked, and I don't know how."

"Don't tell me any more falsehoods!" said

the principal, with a sudden assumption of severity.

"I'm not telling you any falsehood," said Johnny, his cheeks and his eyes ablaze, "and I haven't told you any. And what's more, I've never smoked a cigar and I'm not going to do it now."

So saying the boy turned and threw the cigar out of the nearest window. For a few seconds there was a silence so intense that the ticking of the big clock was the only sound heard in the school-room. Then Mr. Durand folded his hands in front of him, and in his most velvety tone said :

"I might have known that from you I should receive only disrespect, but I did not look for open defiance. I am afraid that I cannot permit you any longer to hold your pernicious example before the students of this institution. Therefore, my misguided young friend, it becomes my sorrowful duty to announce that you are expelled from the Tuzo School."

"Expelled!" exclaimed Johnny.

He turned and looked around the school-room, as if hoping that now Morton would speak, but the whole assembly remained silent.

"Well," said Johnny, slowly, "perhaps it's the best thing that could have happened to me."

And he walked firmly out of the room.

CHAPTER V

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

JOHNNY went to his own room up under the mansard roof and sat down to think.

“ I wonder,” he reflected, “ whether I’ve been foolish in this matter. Ought I to have told Mr. Durand that Morton and Frank were the fellows who smoked up here last night? Of course, if I had done that, the other fellows would have made the school too cold to hold me. None of them would have spoken to me again, and they’d have shut me out of all the games and everything, and I’d have been a sort of outcast, I suppose. So here I am, expelled because it is not honorable to tell on the fellows who did the wrong, and they aren’t the sort to get up and confess. But suppose I had told ; what then? Mr. Durand would have rolled up his eyes in horror, and said that I was a wicked, wicked boy to dare to accuse such a fine young gentleman as Morton Brewer. And he’d have refused to believe me, and written to my guardian, and Mr. Brewer would have

given me a good going over, and would have taken his own son's side. He'd never take mine, that's sure. And now I wonder what he'll do about it, anyhow? I'm expelled, and he can't send me back to the Tuzo School; that's one comfort."

Johnny now began slowly to gather his things preparatory to packing them, and a feeling of sadness stole over the lonely little fellow. His room at the Tuzo school was neither large nor cheerful, but it was his own. It was the one place to which he could retire and shut himself up from the hard and troublesome outside world that seemed to have so little time to care for a helpless orphan. Mr. Brewer's house was not even an apology for a home for Johnny, because he was made to feel when there that he was not a member of the family. He made friends with the servants, to be sure, and the big red-cheeked Irish cook had many kind words and hot cakes for the motherless child, while the coachman taught him to ride and to care for a horse. But Johnny was an outsider for all that, and was made to feel it. But here at school he had a little world of his own, out of which by a cruel reverse of fate he was now to be turned. Sadly he picked up his little belongings, one by one, and began to put

them in his trunk. His worn-out base-ball and his splintered bat, and the ragged little cap that he had worn on the ball-field, caused him a sigh of vain regret. The photograph of the second nine almost brought tears to his eyes, and he gulped down a sob when he came to the picture of the one boy who had been his good friend, and had left the school the previous year. Presently he picked up the little Bible which had once been his mother's, and then the tears did roll down his cheeks, and he felt like going over to the school-room and begging Mr. Durand not to send him away. The little book fell open in his hands, and as he gazed down at it through the haze of tears, these words suddenly blazed out in tremulous letters before his eyes.

“Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed, let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths.

Lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses ; for they have been ever of old.

Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions ; according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.

Good and upright is the Lord ; therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

The meek will he guide in judgment ; and the meek will he teach his way."

Perhaps Johnny did not fully grasp the meaning of the inspired words of the Psalmist, but the great power of the passage spread its healing influence over his injured spirit. He closed the book, slipped down upon his knees beside the chair, and in a blind and groping, but very trustful and reverent way, prayed that he might be meek and so get the guidance of the Father of orphans. When he arose he felt that strangely sweet and mysterious comfort that seems to be the inevitable result of the act of prayer. The lonely little boy was once more brave and resolute, and felt ready to face the world that lay beyond the gates of the Tuzo School. He finished his packing with a calmer spirit, and went down into the campus. He might have stolen away unobserved, but

there were two or three boys to whom he wished to say a parting word, so he sat down under the trees near the old pump and waited for recess. The robins twittered so merrily in the branches over his head that he looked up with a smile and said, half aloud :

“I wonder if those fellows have school up there; and if they do, do they tell on one another when any of them does wrong? They chatter enough anyhow.”

His innocent reflections were disturbed by the noise of the boys as they came clattering and shouting down the school-house stairs. Recess lasted only ten minutes at the Tuzo School, and so no attempt was made to start a game of any sort. The boys usually rushed for a drink or to do errands in their rooms. But to-day they caught sight of their expelled schoolmate sitting under the trees, and there was a general pause.

“I believe he did smoke,” said Barney Free, “and it serves him right to be expelled.”

“Well, Barney, you may believe whatever you please,” replied Joe Garr, “but I’m pretty sure that I could lay my hand on the fine gentlemen who did the smoking, and he wasn’t one of them.”

“If you know so much,” retorted Barney,

"why don't you go and give Durand the hint?"

"Because it would be more dishonorable for me than it would for Johnny," answered Joe; "besides, I don't positively know; I only suspect."

"Oh!" exclaimed Barney with a contemptuous sneer.

But Joe Garr walked over to Johnny and held out his hand. "Good-by, Johnny," he said, "I'm mighty sorry you've got into this mess, and it doesn't seem exactly right to me that there shouldn't be some way out of it for you."

"Then you don't think I smoked?"

"Not a bit of it, and what's more I have my suspicions as to who did, and I think it's pretty low down of them not to tell."

"So do I," said Johnny, "but I'm not going to say any more about that. I've just waited to say good-by to you and two or three other fellows that I like."

At that moment Mr. Durand appeared at the school-house door, and, seeing Johnny, advanced with a stern face.

"John Rodgers," he said, "I forbid you to mingle with your former school-mates. You are no longer a student of this institution and you must leave the grounds."

"I'm going, Mr. Durand," answered Johnny; "I stopped only to say good-by to two or three friends."

"Friends! You have no friends here, sir. You are in disgrace." Johnny looked around at the group of boys that had gathered, but none of them thought it wise to speak just then.

"Perhaps I have no friends here, sir," said he, "although I'm not quite so sure of that as you seem to be. But I'm not altogether without friends, I think."

"If you expect that Hiram Brewer will do anything," said Mr. Durand, "you are——"

"Oh, no," said Johnny, "I wasn't thinking of Mr. Brewer; I was thinking of One who is more powerful than he or you."

And leaving Mr. Durand quite aghast at his impudence in relying upon Providence, Johnny walked slowly out of the grounds of the Tuzo School, never to return.

CHAPTER VI

OUT IN THE COLD WORLD

FIVE miles are not much to a stout young fellow who has been accustomed to the use of his limbs. Johnny did not give the matter a thought when he started off for Sancet, because he was usually permitted to walk the distance between the Tuzo School and his guardian's house. The boy did wish that his trunk was out of the school, for he felt that his little personal property would be safer if it were by his side. But he hoped that his guardian would perceive the necessity of sending after the trunk, because it would be cheaper to do that than to buy Johnny new clothes.

When the boy was fairly out of sight of the school-house, around a turn in the road, his spirits began to rise. He whistled merrily as he strode along and at times skipped. Presently he saw a gray squirrel sitting up at one side of the way and eying him with much curiosity. Johnny had some half dried bits of bread in his pocket, and he tossed one of them

gently toward the bright-eyed beast. The little fellow scampered off a few feet, but soon cautiously returned and began to nibble at the bread. Johnny sat down on a fallen tree and watched him.

"Not much trouble for you to get along in the world," said the boy, half aloud; "you don't have to go to school and learn all sorts of things that you don't see the use of, do you? And you don't get expelled, either. Half an acre of woods is all the world you need, and the nuts grow just on purpose to feed you, and if some fellow comes along with a piece of bread in his pocket, why, that's a picnic for you, isn't it? Now, what do you suppose is going to become of me? Am I going to be sent to another school, or apprenticed to a carpenter, or what? Oh, I wish it was like it used to be in the old fairy tales, and you would turn into a little old woman and be my fairy godmother and fix everything all right for me! Why, I'd find a pot of gold under this tree, and I'd go back to Sancet and marry the princess and live happily ever afterward. But there isn't any pot of gold, and there isn't any princess, and you're nothing but a gray squirrel, anyhow."

At that moment a farm wagon came rattling

down the road and frightened the squirrel away, so Johnny arose and resumed his journey. The morning was warm and sultry, and it looked as if there might be a thunder-shower before night. The boy paused at a little stream that crossed the road and bathed his face and head.

"I wish it was big enough for a swim," said Johnny to himself. "That's where those minnies down there have the best of me. I seem to be on the wrong side of everything just now. But never mind, my turn will come; it's got to come."

He trudged along again, and before noon entered Sancet and came in sight of Hiram Brewer's house. Beyond the house he saw the blue waters of the harbor dancing in the white sunlight, and the smell of the familiar salt breeze gave him a happy turn. He walked briskly to the house and passed around to the kitchen, which was his customary entrance.

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed the cook, "its the bye. Fwhat are ye doin' here?"

"Oh, I've come away from school for good, Bridget," said Johnny.

"Far good?"

"Yes, I've been expelled. Where's Mr. Brewer?"

"He's up shtairs in the loibrary. Wurra! Ye're exshpelled! Sure it's a great bye ye are, indade."

Bridget's notions of the meaning of "expelled" were somewhat hazy. Johnny went upstairs and paused in front of the library.

"I suppose I may as well go right in and get it all over," he said. So he knocked briskly at the door.

"Come in," said a thin, nasal voice.

The boy entered. Hiram Brewer was seated at his desk, and he did not lift his head as his ward entered. He was a hard-featured man, with wiry gray hair and a waxy skin, and as he sat doubled up over his desk he was not an encouraging picture.

"Well, well," he snapped, without looking around to see who it was, "what is it? What is it?"

"It is I, sir," said Johnny, quietly.

The old man dropped his pen, threw himself back in his chair, pushed up his spectacles, and, whirling around, looked at the boy in silent amazement. At length he found his voice, and said:

"Well, well; what are you doing here? If you've come to ask for anything, you'll not get it—mind that, you'll not get it. You've no

business to be here, anyhow. I'm paying for you at the Tuzo School, sir, a fine institution, sir, and that's where you ought to be. Why don't you answer me, sir? What are you doing here?"

"I'm not here of my own choice, sir," began Johnny, and then he paused. It was not easy to announce the truth.

"Not here of your own choice, eh? Did Mr. Durand send you? Well, well, what does *he* want, eh?"

"The fact is, sir, I'm expelled," said Johnny, bluntly.

"Wha-a-a-t!"

Mr. Brewer's exclamation was a kind of shriek, and it startled Johnny so that he fell back two or three steps. His guardian sat staring at him for a few minutes, and then, shaking his head vigorously, said:

"I always knew that you would come to a bad end, you worthless young rascal! But what have you been doing, eh?"

Without mentioning the names of the boys who smoked in his room, Johnny told his guardian the story.

"If someone else smoked in your room, why didn't you tell Mr. Durand who it was, eh?" demanded Mr. Brewer.

"Because the fellows say that it's low to tell on anyone."

"Rubbish, sir, rubbish! You have no business to get expelled from an expensive school because you won't tell, sir; no business at all. Who were the boys?"

"Frank Betts and Morton Brewer, sir."

For a moment Mr. Brewer looked as if he would burst with rage. His face turned almost purple, and dark veins swelled out on his temples. He sprang to his feet and advanced toward the boy.

"How dare you, you young villain, how dare you accuse my son of such a thing?"

"I didn't wish to accuse anyone," said Johnny, stoutly. "You asked me for the names and I gave them to you."

"You don't speak the truth, sir; you can't; it isn't in you. Morton never did such a thing."

The old man paused for breath and Johnny stood silent, because he knew that it would be a sheer waste of time and breath to say anything to his infuriated guardian.

"There is but one thing for you to do, sir," said Mr. Brewer at length.

"And what is that, sir?"

"You must go right back to that school and

apologize to Mr. Durand, and make a confession before the whole school."

"But I have nothing to confess, sir."

"Don't talk to me, you wicked boy. You must confess that you did the smoking yourself."

"But I didn't."

"How dare you persist in denying it, eh? Don't you know that I can see through your miserable falsehoods?"

"That'll do, Mr. Brewer," said Johnny, in a most decided tone. "I don't tell falsehoods, and I haven't told one now. I didn't smoke, and I shall not go back to the Tuzo School, and I shall not make any apology or any confession."

For several moments Mr. Brewer was quite unable to speak, so amazed and enraged was he by the boy's determined opposition.

"You hardened young villain," he exclaimed, at length, "get out of the house at once! Go on! Back to the school with you! Don't you dare to show your face here again till you have done as I have bid you!"

Mr. Brewer took Johnny by the shoulders and pushed him out of the library, down the hall, and out of the front door, continuing his harsh orders all the way until he had fairly

put the boy into the street. Then he returned to the library, satisfied that his firmness would be effectual and that Johnny would do as he had been bid. But he did not understand the spirit of his ward. The boy stood before the house a few minutes in deep thought. A close observer might have noted that, as he stood, his eyes began to burn with a steady light, while his lips closed tightly together.

"If I am never to return to that house," he said, half aloud and very slowly, as if weighing each word, "until I have confessed to what I did not do, and apologized to Mr. Durand, I am afraid that I am outside of it for a long, long time."

And, with these words, the boy turned and walked down toward the harbor.

CHAPTER VII

LOST IN A SQUALL

IT must be admitted that although Johnny's mind was firmly made up in regard to the confession, he was filled with uncertainty as to the outcome of his action.

"Here I am," he said to himself, as he moved slowly down the quiet village street, "out in the world, as far as I can see, and pretty flat on my back. What am I going to do? I can saw wood and run errands and make myself pretty useful in small ways, but that isn't going to suit me at all. Why, I haven't half enough education yet. I need to go to school a whole lot more; but not at the price that Mr. Brewer names. I wonder what I'm going to do without my clothes, too. It seems to me that this pickle I'm in keeps getting worse and worse. Heigho! There must be some way out of it, I suppose, though I can't see it just now."

The boy wandered on down the street. The sound of a drum fell upon his ears and he paused. He heard the rhythmic tramp of feet

and the Sancet Home Guards came marching around a corner.

"Now suppose I were to enlist in the army," said the boy to himself. "I might get to be a great general and come home and make the Brewer family feel mightily ashamed."

Johnny watched the Home Guards marching rigidly up the street, and shook his head.

"No," he muttered, "I'm afraid I couldn't stand that sort of thing. It's too stiff for me. I like my liberty too well. Besides, the Home Guards are only play soldiers anyhow, and in the real army they wouldn't have me because I'm too little."

Again the boy resumed his walk toward the harbor, and in a few minutes arrived at the pier where the steamboat landed twice a week. Johnny sat down on the string-piece, and rested his face on his hands. Directly in front of him a handsome twenty-five-foot cat-boat lay moored to a buoy.

"Humph!" exclaimed Johnny, half under his breath, "there's Morton Brewer's boat. I'd like to know how it is that he can have a handsome boat like that, and I can't have even an old scow. If the truth could be got at I'm sure it would be found that some of my money helped to pay for her."

The boy sat silent for a few minutes, while some unusually bitter thoughts filled his mind. Suddenly he sprang to his feet.

"Turns me out of his house because I refuse to bear his son's punishment, does he? Well, that boat's as much mine as it is Morton's, and if I can't do anything else, I can go out sailing."

Johnny went to the shore end of the pier where a small rowboat was fastened, and casting off her painter, rowed out to the cat-boat. He made the row-boat fast to the buoy and, boarding the other craft, took the stops off the mainsail. As he was hoisting the sail, the old fisherman who took care of the cat-boat shuffled down the pier and called out to him :

"What you doin' with that boat?"

"I'm going out for a sail."

"You got Mr. Brewer's p'mission?"

"No ; he didn't get mine to build her."

The fisherman stood aghast at this reply for a moment, and then he cried :

"Hol' on! You mustn't take the boat!"

"You dry up, old shellback," replied Johnny, letting the boat fill away with the wind over her starboard quarter.

"That there boy's crazy," muttered the old man, as he watched his marine charge slipping away to the southward.

As the boat shot out from under the lee of the land and caught the full weight of the breeze, she began to speed through the smooth blue water in an inspiring manner, and Johnny's spirits rose accordingly.

"Go it, Petrel," he said, laughing for the first time that day; "I believe you know that the right hand is at the helm."

Johnny was a tolerably good sailor, for although he had no boat of his own, he often went out with some of the Sancet fishermen, and was regarded as a pretty fair handler of small craft. He stood right on out of the harbor and soon had the long, smooth swell of the sea lifting the cat-boat on its undulations.

"This is just fine," said Johnny to himself. "I wonder if there's anything to eat aboard her."

He searched the little cuddy forward, but it was empty.

"Never mind," he said, "with this breeze I can beat back in plenty of time for supper, and—well, I wonder, come to think of it, where I'm going to get any supper."

He dropped the tiller and let the boat come up into the wind, while he once more lost himself in thought about the peculiar features of his own case. Now eternal vigilance is the

price of safety at sea, and Johnny was neglecting that fundamental principle. While he sat lost in meditation, the wind died completely out, and heavy black clouds gathered in the northwest. Lightning played in their oily folds and low mutterings of thunder were audible. Presently writhing shreds of grayish vapor began to shoot forward from the upper edge of the thunder-cloud. Just as some of these shreds were almost over his head, a louder peal of thunder startled Johnny and he looked up.

“Good gracious!” he exclaimed. “There’s going to be a squall.”

He sprang forward to let go the halyards and lower the sail, but at that instant the wind burst upon his little craft with a wild shriek. The mainsail swung forward with a sudden jerk. Johnny saw it coming and threw up his arm to guard his head from the blow. The stout canvass struck him, and the next instant he found himself going over backward into the sea. After the first moment of startled surprise, he paddled gently, knowing that he would soon come to the surface. Of course he did so, and at once looked around to see what had become of the boat. He saw her twenty yards away from him, with a broken gaff and a

torn mainsail, driving before the wind. In an instant he realized that he could not overtake her, and he put into practice all his skill at swimming. He got his shoes and coat off, and then tried to see where the nearest land lay. But at that very moment the rain came down in torrents, and the poor boy could not see ten yards on any side. He now gave himself up for lost, yet the spark of hope that still burned in his inmost soul caused him to swim slowly, husbanding his strength to the utmost.

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The cat-boat was picked up by one of the fishermen the next morning, and towed into Sancet Harbor. Word was sent to Mr. Brewer and he hastened down to the pier.

"Who's been using that boat?" he demanded.

"Wal," said the man who brought her in, "whoever it was won't use her ag'in, fur we found her empty six mile out to sea."

Just then the old fisherman who took care of the boat came shambling down the pier.

"I knowed that boy'd git into trouble," he whined; "but I couldn't stop him."

"What boy?" demanded Mr. Brewer, turning pale with apprehension.

"Johnny Rodgers, o' course," said the old

fisherman. "He tuk the boat out yistiddy an hour or so afore the squall, an' I couldn't stop him."

Now it must be said in justice to Mr. Brewer that he was terribly shocked and grieved. He would have given a good, round sum of money—and money was what he loved best—to see Johnny safe and well at that moment. He had no love for the boy, but he was not wicked enough to wish him to die.

"Is there no hope for the boy?" he asked, huskily.

"Wal, sir," said the man who brought the boat in, "I'm mortal sorry to say it, but I'm afeard there ain't. You see, I reckon he was knocked overboard when the squall struck her and couldn't git back aboard o' her. An' it's hardly likely a little feller like him could swim long with all his clothes on in sich a squall."

Mr. Brewer shook his head sadly, but presently a new light came into his eyes.

"If the boy's drowned," he thought, "it's not my fault in any way at all. And the money—that'll be mine."

He turned to the fishermen who stood silently near him and said:

"Men, I'll give ten dollars to the one who recovers his body."

“Wal, Mr. Brewer,” said one, “I’m afraid there ain’t much hope o’ that.”

“But you’ll try?”

“Oh, yas, we’ll try, of course.”

Hiram Brewer walked homeward in deep thought.

CHAPTER VIII

JOHNNY ALL AT SEA

OF course Johnny Rodgers was not drowned. If he had been, this story would not have been written. If the boy had not been so deeply absorbed in his own thoughts just before the squall swept down upon him, he would have seen a large ship with tall topsails standing along on an easy bowline three or four miles southwest of him. After the squall had set in the boy had no opportunity to see her, and when he was in the water the curtain of driving rain shut her out from his view. She was a fine old-fashioned vessel with high sides and towering poop and forecastle. No second glance would have been necessary to tell a sailor that she was a line-of-battle ship. The military precision of the trim of her yards would have been enough, but further evidence could have been obtained from the enormous hoist of her topsails and the nettings stretched from her spritsail yard. A landsman might have noted the coach-whip pennant of Captain

Robert Barker, and he would certainly have understood the meaning of the double row of ports that pierced the polished black sides. The whole cut and figure of her proclaimed that she was an old seventy-four gun-ship, built long before the advent of steam, and now relegated to the duty of coastwise cruising at some distance from the centre of the war. The Stars and Stripes streamed from her spanker peak. She was a brave ship of the old days, and across her stern, with a gilded eagle in the centre, ran the letters MOHAWK. As she stood on her course the officer of the deck, Lieutenant Brinley Jordan, a handsome young man of thirty, kept his eye on the gathering squall, until he deemed it to be time to take action. Then he called a messenger and sent him to warn the First Lieutenant, Mr. Horace Freeman, who at once came on deck.

"Ah, Jordan," he said, "a bit of a puff over there, eh? Well, sir, it's a good old rule that advocates an ounce of prevention; so in with your flying jib, mainsail and spanker, take in the topgallants and clew down the topsails. Set the foretopmast staysail and haul down the jib."

Mr. Jordan gave half a dozen orders and the shrill screaming of the boatswain's pipe started

a small army of willing arms heaving and hauling, till the air was full of the rattle of blocks and the thunder of slatting canvas. At this moment the Captain emerged from his cabin. A tall, bronzed seaman, with grizzled side-whiskers and a keen, gray eye, was Captain Robert Barker, and a single glance was enough to inform him of the state of the weather and the condition of his ship to meet it.

"A smooth sea and a white squall make naked spars, Mr. Freeman," he said.

"Yes, sir," answered the First Lieutenant; "but I fancy that it's going to be a short puff, though a hard one."

"And here it comes, sir," said the Captain, letting his voice swell into a deep bass roar as he called out, "a hand by the foresheet there. Mind your luff, you at the helm, and don't let her get aback."

The wind came sweeping across the water, changing its glassy surface into dark wrinkles, and struck the ship with violence. If she had met that blow with such canvas as she had been carrying ten minutes earlier, she would have lost her topmasts. But now she simply careened gracefully, while the blast howled hoarsely, but harmlessly through her tense cordage.

"Rain, sir, and a smart bucketful of it," said the First Lieutenant.

"But it will not last long, Mr. Freeman," said the Captain; "it's a frisky climate and many's the queer shift of wind I've seen along this New England coast. Keep her full and by, there!"

"Full and by, sir," answered the man at the wheel.

"As I was saying," continued the Captain, "I've seen the wind and weather cut queer capers out this way. I remember, sir, that in 1851, I was coming down from—Hello! what's that?"

A loud shout forward had interrupted the Captain at the very beginning of his yarn.

"A man swimming, sir!" shouted a petty officer who had leaped upon the cat-head. "No, it's a boy!"

"Heave a life-buoy!" shouted the Captain, springing to the weather-rail and executing his own command. "Keep up there, boy, we'll pick you up! Let her come up! Back the fore-topsail yard, Mr. Jordan! Call away the second cutter!"

The ship's spar-deck at once became the scene of bustling activity, which to a landsman's eye would have appeared to be no better

than inextricable confusion. Certain hands sprang to let go the forward lee braces and others to haul aft the weather braces in order that the fore-topsail might be faced against the wind, and so check the vessel's headway. At the same time a dozen men were busy casting off the stoppers and leading out the falls of the second cutter, which swung on the ship's lee quarter. The rattling of blocks and flapping of canvas mingled with the pealing of thunder, the plash of heavy rain and the hiss of water under the Mohawk's bows to fill the air with discordant noises. But in spite of noise and confusion the designs of Captain Barker were accomplished. The ship came up to the wind and her advance was reduced to a minimum, while the cutter was ready to be dropped into the sea.

"Lower away there!" cried the Captain; "and pull heartily, lads. Do you see him, Mr. Jordan?"

This question was addressed to the young Lieutenant, who had stationed himself at the taffrail and was straining his eyes in the attempt to catch sight of the swimmer.

"No, sir," he replied; "yet I'll be bound that he's less than a quarter of a mile off our weather quarter. But the rain hides him, sir."

"How is the boat heading? Toward him, do you think?"

"As nearly as I can judge, sir, she is on the right course."

"How on earth does it happen that a boy is swimming out here and not a vessel in sight?" said the Captain; "but he will tell us that himself, if we save him, which God grant we may."

"Amen, sir," said Mr. Jordan.

The cutter had now disappeared behind the gray curtain of the driving rain, and those aboard the ship waited with intense anxiety for her re-appearance. The weather-rail was crowded with the faces of bronzed and grizzled seamen, all of whom were peering intently into the gloom. The saving of life on the deep never becomes an old story to the sailor. It always has a deep thrill for him, because he never knows but his turn to be saved may come next. Ten, fifteen, twenty minutes passed away, and the rain was over. As it became thinner and thinner and the horizon widened, a shout arose forward.

"There she is! And they've got him! Hurrah!"

The cutter had, indeed, succeeded in finding poor Johnny, who had seen the life-buoy, reached it and clung to it. As soon as he re-

covered his breath he began to shout, and his cries guided the young officer in charge of the cutter to the spot. He was hauled into the boat in an exhausted condition. When the cutter reached the ship, the boy was at once taken to the sick bay and put under the surgeon's care. That officer reported an hour later to the Captain:

"The boy's all right, sir. He's young and strong and used to the water."

"I'd like to see him, then," said Captain Barker.

Johnny was brought to the cabin, where he told the Captain how he had gone out sailing and been upset in the squall.

"And now, if you please, sir," said the boy, "I'd like to be put ashore at Sancet; that's where I live."

"I'm sorry, my lad," said the Captain, "but we are ten miles away from Sancet Harbor now, and this ship is under orders to proceed with all possible speed to Boston. When we arrive there, I'll put you ashore at once and you can return to your family. Be sure, they'll be mightily glad to see you. But, for the present, you must be content to stay where you are."

Johnny stood and stared blankly at Captain Barker.

CHAPTER IX

IN THE SECOND DOG-WATCH

"YOU may wander about the ship for the present," said the Captain ; " I've no doubt that you will find something to interest you. Have you ever been aboard a man-of-war before ? "

" No, sir," answered Johnny ; " I've seen ships, but not fighting ships."

" Well, you run about. No one will stop you. At five o'clock the crew will have supper. You report to the officer of the deck and he will send you to someone who will give you something to eat. To-night we'll give you a hammock. Have you ever slept in a hammock ? "

" No, sir, but I'd like to," answered the boy, who was already becoming interested in the novelty of his new surroundings.

" Do you know anything about sailing ? "

" I can sail a cat-boat, sir."

" And get upset in a squall," said Captain Barker, smiling ; " never mind, my boy, such misfortunes happen to older hands than you. Here, Meredith ! "

"Aye, aye, sir," answered a handsome boy in the uniform of a sailor, springing forward and touching his cap.

"Take Master John Rodgers and make him acquainted with the Mohawk."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered Meredith, turning to Johnny with a frank smile. "Come along, and we'll go down below and work up."

So saying, Meredith dived down the main hatch, followed by Johnny, who found it somewhat difficult to keep his feet on the steep ladders, as the ship was rolling a little. Down they went, the light becoming dimmer and dimmer, till they were away down in a sort of subterranean place, where a single lantern sufficed to make the black shadows denser. The place smelled damp and strange and was full of queer, unexpected creaks and cracks, as if ever and anon a strained timber had given way.

"This is the main hold," said Meredith, "and out forward are the magazines. You mustn't be taken there, and you can't see much down here, anyhow."

"It's a very squeaky sort of place," said Johnny.

"You ought to hear it in a gale," said Meredith, "why, you'd think the old hooker was just going to pieces right off."

"What old hooker?" inquired Johnny.

"This one; that's one name for a ship," answered Meredith, smiling; "I forgot you weren't a sailor. Come up on the berth deck."

They passed to the deck above, and there Johnny saw rows and rows of hammock-hooks, where the men slung their swinging beds at night. He saw also various rooms, used for stores, for petty officers' quarters, and for numerous other purposes. A few seamen were lying in corners on the hard deck, sound asleep.

"Why don't they swing their hammocks?" asked Johnny.

"We're not allowed to have our hammocks during the day," answered Meredith; "they're all stowed in the hammock nettings and are not taken out till night, and they're put back in the morning. Come along."

They passed up to the lower gun-deck, where Johnny saw the great galley-stove and the cooks, the sick bay, and other interesting things, including the long rows of shining black guns, held firmly in place by their breechings and side tackles. Next they ascended to the upper gun-deck, and there Johnny saw the great anchor-chains and bitts by which the ship rode when her sails were furled. Aft the main-mast he saw several officers sitting at

their ease on the half deck, as it is called, and caught a glimpse through the open door of the wardroom—the officers' quarters. The two returned to the spar-deck, where Johnny gazed in bewilderment at the maze of sails and rigging.

"I don't believe," he said, "that I could ever learn the names of all those ropes. Do you know them?"

"Of course," answered Meredith, with a laugh. "This is the fore clew-garnet, and this is the foretops'l clewl'n, and this is the foretops'l sheet, and this——"

"Oh, wait!" cried Johnny. "I'll have to learn them one at a time, and I'm afraid I shall not manage to do it before we are at Boston."

"Well, I should say not!" rejoined Meredith. "It'll take you a month or two. But hark! there goes the call to spread mess-gear."

"What does that mean?"

"Set the table. In ten minutes the meal call will sound. Why don't you come and eat in our mess? We've a fine set of fellows there."

"I'd like to," said Johnny; "but the Captain ordered me to report to the officer of the deck at supper-time."

"Well, you tell him that you'd like to mess with me, and he'll let you. You're a visitor aboard, you know."

The officer of the deck promptly granted Johnny's request, and in a few minutes the boy was seated at a swinging table on the lower gun-deck, surrounded by bronzed and bearded fellows, who regarded him with curious eyes. Here he made his first acquaintance with real sailors' fare, and he was not well pleased with it.

"Your teeth ain't be'n hardened wi' chewin' oakum, my son," said a seaman sitting opposite to the boy, "or you'd not pull faces over salt horse."

"Well, Porgy," said Meredith, "it's hardly likely that his teeth are as hard as yours or his skin, either."

The sailor addressed as Porgy shook his head solemnly, as he stared at Meredith, and he relapsed into silence.

When the supper was over, most of the men repaired to the fore-castle, where they proceeded to make merry in sea fashion; for it was a dog-watch and a time for recreation. Johnny saw the sailor named Porgy sitting on the port side, just under the fore rigging, with a very greasy old fiddle tucked under his chin. He sawed away at the instrument with a sprung bow as if he were determined to wear a hole through it, and he produced a most amazing series of

bass groans and treble squeaks, so that one might have fancied that two fat old boars were engaged in a brisk debate over a fresh bucket of sour milk. But by industriously wagging his head and thumping on the deck with a foot as flat and as broad as the model of a ferry-boat, Porgy managed to indicate a rhythm, to which a powerfully framed colored man and an agile young apprentice danced in contrasted styles.

“Go it, Scipio! Bravo, Miss Mittykins!” cried the observers, while the crimsoning rays of the declining sun turned the great white folds of canvas above them into crescents of luminous pink, and along the fore-castle deck made purple shadows, among which gleamed, like fiery eyes, the red-hot bowls of half a hundred pipes. The dance being ended, because “Miss Mittykins” became exhausted with laughter, a score of voices, hoarse with sea-fog, rumbled out a cry:

“A song! Where’s our primy donny! Where’s Ma’m’selle de Calaveras?”

“Ma’m’selle de Calaveras” proved to be a pretty, pink-cheeked boy of fourteen, who came forward laughing and swinging along the deck with the sinuous grace of a deep-sea roll. Two blue jackets caught him up and stood him on a gun-carriage, where he surveyed the assembly with a merry, loving eye.

"What'll it be, bullies?" he cried, in a sweet musical soprano that promised well for the song.

"'Tom Bowling!' 'Little Cardee!' 'Braisted's Cruise!'"

Voices tossed the names of the songs back and forth along the deck in a babel of confusion till "Mlle. de Calaveras" stretched an arm out, and in his clear young voice cried:

"Silence, you sand-sharks! In honor of our guest I'll sing 'Little Cardee.' Heave ahead, Porgy."

Porgy scraped out some very doleful groans and sighs from the fiddle by way of prelude, and then Mlle. de Calaveras sang, in a soprano voice that would have graced a cathedral:

"Oh, Little Cardee went down by the sea,
 An' he looks at the ships and sloops,
 An' the brigs an' the barks an' the werry old arks,
 With admirals on their poops.
 An' Little Cardee, says he, says he,
 'A sailor I'm a-goin' to be.'

"So Little Cardee swam out to sea
 An' hailed the Kangaroo;
 An' says to the skipper, a werry old nipper,
 'A sailor I'd like to be.'
 An' the cap'n o' the Kangaroo, says he:
 'A sailor you're a-goin' to be.'

“ An’ when Little Card laid out on a yard,
A-furlin’ the main roy-all,
He says to himself : ‘ This bloomin’ shelf
Is not no public hall.’
But Little Cardee, says he, says he,
‘ A sailor I got to be.’

“ But by and by the wind blew high,
An’ the Kangaroo hove to ;
But the seas broke over that ocean rover,
An’ the binnacle light turned blue.
An’ Little Cardee, says he, says he,
‘ A-drownded I’m goin’ to be.’

“ With a jump and a squeak an’ a werry big leak
She let the water through ;
An’ down to the bottom, where the mermaids got ’em,
Sank the crew of the Kangaroo.
But Little Cardee, says he, says he,
‘ A-rescued I’m a-goin’ to be.’

“ For he sees a ship with her yards a-dip
A-comin’ at a lively walk ;
An’ soon he was gabbin’ in the Capting’s cabin
O’ the U. S. S. Mohawk.
An’ Little Cardee was safe an’ free,
An’ a sailor at last was he.”

Mlle. de Calaveras sang that song with all his heart, and when he had finished it the hands forward set up a cheer and some of them, seizing the young fellow, bore him uproariously around the deck on their shoulders. Johnny

was much impressed by the song, which seemed to have such direct reference to his own case, but Meredith assured him that it had been introduced aboard the Mohawk in her early days and was regarded as her especial property. But the dog-watch entertainment was not over yet.

"Where's Muckles? Muckles!" yelled half a dozen voices. "Come out here and do your stunts."

"Muckles" proved to be a long, lean, lanky blue-jacket, who was among the berth-deck cooks. He slipped off his shoes, threw aside his cap, hitched up his trousers, and, stepping forward, saluted the assembly in a style that recalled to Johnny's mind the country circus. Then "Muckles" went through a clever contortion act and retired amid great applause.

"He does it as well as a circus-man," said Johnny.

"He used to be one," said Meredith, and, noting Johnny's look of surprise, he added, "We have all kinds of men in this service. One of our forecastle hands was a minister once, but he got into some sort of trouble and went to sea. You never know who you're going to meet aboard a man-o'-war."

The ship's bugler now came forward and re-

cited a pathetic poem with real dramatic effect, and a colored man was in the middle of a banjo solo, when eight bells struck and the fun came to a sudden end. The sun had gone down and left a faint glow in the western horizon. In the east, the deep blue of the sky was gemmed with a few brilliant stars, and the sea ran in long wavering lines to the dim horizon. Aloft a gentle breeze sang among the tense cordage and in the hollows of the white sails, while under the ship's forefoot the ripples poured in a gurgling stream. Johnny leaned against a gun-carriage gazing at the flowing waves and talking in a low tone to Meredith till the shrill screaming of a boatswain's pipe ordered them to their hammocks.

"I wonder where I shall be this time to-morrow night," thought Johnny, as the gentle swinging of his new bed lulled him into sleep.

CHAPTER X

“AN’ A SAILOR AT LAST WAS HE”

ONCE or twice in the course of the night the boy was half awakened by the clatter of feet on the deck above his head when the watch was changed, but most of the time he slept with the soundness of weary youth. Johnny was not the sort of boy to be greatly upset by his surroundings, and when he was really tired he could sleep anywhere. But early in the morning the bugle sounded the musical tones of the reveillé, and immediately afterward there was a great screeching of boatswains’ pipes, followed by deep voices, shouting:

“Turn out, all hands! Up all hammocks!”

Johnny sprang upright in his hammock, and the next instant found himself flat on the deck, while the seamen around him were chuckling with laughter.

“Never mind,” said Meredith, “you’re no worse than the rest of them were when they first tried it.”

Meredith then showed him how to roll and

lash his hammock with seven turns and the clews tucked in, and took him to the proper place on the spar-deck to stow it. There Johnny saw his newly made acquaintances of the dog-watch engaged in stowing their hammocks, too. Porgy, the fiddler, dropped him a friendly nod and said:

"A werry good-mornin' to you, my son. An' how d'ye sleep in a canvas bed?"

"Very well, thank you," replied Johnny.

"Good fur you!" said Porgy, emphatically; "it are not no bed o' roses, but it aren't too hard fur a clean conscience, as the widder used to say."

"The widow?" repeated Johnny.

"Yessir, the widder, the werry pertikler lady wot had the honor o' bringin' me up, an' ef I knows ye long 'nuff, some day I'll tell ye 'bout her."

As Porgy lumbered away, the boy called Miss Mittykins, who had danced the night before and was standing near Johnny, said:

"You'll have to know him a good while then. I've been shipmates with him two years and I've never learned the history of the 'widder.'"

For an hour Johnny's attention was absorbed by the work that was done on deck. From the

knighthead to the taffrail, scores of men were at work washing down the vessel. Rigging was neatly coiled up and the wash-deck gear hung up to dry. Brass-work was rubbed till it glowed like fire in the morning sun, and the Mohawk generally was made to look like a lady who had got up and dressed herself neatly for the day. The morning was beautifully clear, with a fair southerly breeze that drove straight over the ship's taffrail and poured along her deck in a cooling torrent. The masts were clothed to the royal yards with rounded sheets of swelling canvas, out of which the wind swirled with a steady murmur. Under the forefoot rose a tumbling pile of snowy foam that streamed away in ribbons of silver on either bow. The Mohawk was reeling off ten knots an hour to the northward. On her port hand, some six or seven miles away, lay the land, making a faint yellow border to the sea-picture, that filled Johnny's eyes with delight.

"Isn't it beautiful?" he exclaimed to Meredith.

"Oh, it's fine enough on a fair summer morning in a royal breeze," answered the young sailor; "but on a winter night in half a gale of wind, with the rigging all iced up and the

topgallant yard jumping under you like a crazy horse, it isn't so very pleasant."

A dim vision of the ship staggering with naked spars across a wild range of foaming cliffs swept through Johnny's mind; but it is not easy to make a boy see the dark side of things when the light side is before his eyes; so he answered:

"Oh, well, I don't suppose I'll ever see that, and as for you, Meredith, you must be used to it."

Meredith shrugged his shoulders, turned away and went on with his work. For nearly two hours the crew was busy making the vessel clean and setting the rigging to rights. At seven o'clock those who had been on watch in the night were turned out and the "six-bell hammocks," as they are called, were stowed. At a quarter past seven the master-at-arms, the chief petty officer of the ship, inspected the servants and boys, and the mate of the berth deck reported his deck ready for breakfast. At 7.20 the officer of the deck ordered the bugler to sound "spread mess-gear," and in a very few minutes all was ready for breakfast, for which the call was sounded at 7.30. Johnny again sat down to eat with his new-found friends, and somehow the lonely boy began to

feel strongly drawn toward them. He had already learned that they were indeed rough, but very frank and straightforward.

"They take a fellow for what he is," thought Johnny, "not for what he has, and there doesn't seem to be any snobbery among them. I suppose all the dignity here is among the officers."

After breakfast the watch on deck was changed and Johnny saw a new officer of the watch, Ensign Frank Truxton, come on duty. This officer sent a messenger forward in search of our young friend. Johnny went aft, and, pausing beside the mainmast, touched his cap, as he had seen the sailors do.

"Ah, my lad," said Mr. Truxton, smiling, "you're becoming quite a man-o'-war's man already."

Johnny blushed and shifted from one foot to the other uneasily.

"Captain Barker has sent word to ask how you are," continued Mr. Truxton, "and whether you have been well taken care of."

"No snobbery aft, either," thought Johnny, as he answered, "I have been very well taken care of, sir, and I wish you'd tell the Captain how grateful I am to him for his kindness."

"Why, my boy, we have done nothing for you that wouldn't be done aboard any vessel

that might have picked you up, even a mere fishing-smack."

"Oh, it makes a good deal of difference how a thing is done," said Johnny.

"Yes, that's true enough," said Mr. Truxton, "but sailors are generally good-natured. Perhaps you haven't had a fair share of kindness."

This was said with such gentleness and sympathy that the little boy launched into a long account of his experiences at school and at home, which was only interrupted by the sighting of the point of Cape Cod on the port bow. Mr. Truxton sent a messenger to inform the Master, Thomas Wilson, who had charge of the navigation of the ship, and an orderly to tell the Captain. The ship rushed swiftly through the blue waters and soon had the point well down on her port quarter. Then, at a nod from the Master, the officer of the watch began to shout orders which were all Greek to Johnny, but which set the sailors at work hauling aft the starboard braces and sheets so as to trim the sails to meet the wind, now on the port beam. The Master gave the compass course to Mr. Truxton and went below. As soon as the bustle of activity was over, Johnny went forward and joined his forecastle friends. The hours passed pleasantly in their company,

and when Minot's Ledge light-house was reached, early in the afternoon, and the crew began preparations for mooring the ship, the boy heaved a long sigh of regret, for he felt that he would rather stay among these new friends than go back to Sancet and be turned out of doors again. Before the Mohawk was up with Boston light Captain Barker sent for Johnny.

"My boy," he said, "what do you intend to do when you go ashore?"

"Well, sir," said Johnny, "I think I can work a passage around to Sancet on a coasting schooner, maybe."

"But why not remain in Boston till you hear from your friends?"

"I don't think I shall hear, sir."

"Why not?"

Johnny then told Captain Barker the whole story of his expulsion from school and from his guardian's house.

"Well, my boy," said the Captain, "the best thing you can do is to write to your guardian at once. He may have relented by this time and will perhaps send for you to go home. Besides he will only know that you went out in the cat-boat and never came back, and he may believe that you are dead."

"And then he'd take the money."

"What money?"

Johnny told the Captain about the little fortune left by his father.

"Well, of course he would take possession of your money," said Captain Barker, "if he thought you were dead, but if you came to life, he'd be obliged to restore it to you. Still, it would save you a lot of trouble to let him know that you are safe and well. In the meantime, as we shall probably lie here for two weeks, you may make my ship your home till you hear from your guardian."

"Thank you, sir," said Johnny.

The boy hastened below and got from Meredith paper and writing materials. He then sat down and wrote to his guardian thus:

BOSTON NAVY YARD, May 22, 1864.

DEAR GUARDIAN:

I was rescued by a boat from the Union ship Mohawk and was not drowned. Captain Barker will let me live on the ship till I hear from you. Maybe you will let me come home now. If you will, please send me enough money to pay my fare.

Yours truly,

JOHN RODGERS.

P. S.—I cannot apologize to Mr. Durand.

Johnny added that postscript because he did

not wish his guardian to be under any misapprehension as to the conditions of his returning home. As soon as the Mohawk's anchor was down in Boston Harbor, a boat was sent ashore with the mail and Johnny's letter was posted. For two weeks, while the Mohawk lay at anchor in Boston Harbor, the boy anxiously waited for a letter from his guardian; but none came. In the meantime he was learning the names of the different parts of the ship and of the spars, ropes, and sails, and their uses too, at a pace that would be equalled only by a boy. Every day he was present at drills, and he was even permitted to go off in the boats, so that he knew the meaning of the boat-orders, and was getting a pretty thorough acquaintance with ship routine. At last the day fixed for the Mohawk's departure arrived and Johnny was told that he must go ashore.

"Oh, what shall I do?" he said to Meredith, "I have never been in Boston. I don't know any one there; I have no money, no friends, and nowhere to go. Won't the Captain let me stay?"

"I don't see how he can," answered Meredith, "unless——"

"Unless what?"

"You enlist."

For a moment the novelty of the idea silenced Johnny. Then he exclaimed:

"And why not? You've all been good to me here. I'm not afraid of the sea. And I'd like to fight the rebels. I'll do it!"

So when the Mohawk passed Minot's Ledge light the next day, bound east, Johnny Rodgers, in the blue uniform of a Jack Tar, was sitting on the forecastle deck, while Porgy Lynn was teaching him how to make a long splice.

CHAPTER XI

A MORNING WATCH IN THE FORETOP

"WHERE do you suppose we are bound?"

"My son, I don't never indulge in s'posin'."

"What do you do?"

"Nothin' as much as I kin' till some brass-mounted orfcer comes 'long an' orders me to do somethin', an' then I does it, an' I does it mighty quick."

The speakers were Porgy Lynn and Johnny. They were seated on the platform at the head of the foremast, known as the foretop. It was in the early hours of the morning watch, and Johnny was delighted at the opportunity to go a little way aloft and sit poised in the sweet morning air gazing over the brilliant blue sea. He had been at work on the forecastle when the boatswain's mate had ordered Porgy to go up and relieve the lookout.

"There's two on 'em up there, aint there?" said Porgy.

"Of course, old blowhard, an' what's that to you?" asked the boatswain's mate.

"Wal, there's only one o' me."

"An' a mighty poor one, too. But you take one o' the boys up there with you."

"Ef it's all the same to you," said Porgy, "I'll take this un here."

"What! young greeny? All right."

And the boatswain's mate strode away while Johnny stood gazing at Porgy in open surprise.

"I'm much obliged to you, Mr. Lynn," he said.

"Mister! I ain't no mister. Only orfcers is misters aboard a man-o'-war."

"Well, what am I to call you?"

"You're to call me Porgy, same as the widder did."

"All right," replied Johnny, laughing, "Porgy it shall be."

"An' now, my son," said the old sailor, "I'll trouble you to get up to the foretop."

"Must I go first?" asked the boy.

"Sure nuff, else who's goin' to catch you ef you fall? That's wot I'm here fur, as the widder used to say when the butcher axed her to pay his bill. Now then, get your foot on this here piece o' wood across the bottom o' the shrouds, w'ich it's called the sheer batten, an' you're to remember that as long as you live."

"The sheer batten," repeated Johnny. "All right, mist—Porgy, I mean; I'll remember it."

"Now up you go. Here! Easy's the word, an' don't trust so much to the rattlins."

"Why not? Aren't they there to step on?"

"Yes, but put yer feet closer to the shrouds an' hold by the shrouds with yer han's. Oh, them rattlins is all right aboard here, 'cos the bosun keeps a eye on 'em. But some day you might be aboard some ole merchant hooker where things ain't looked arter as they is on a fightin' hooker, an' then you'd mebbe git a bad tumble."

Johnny thanked Porgy for his advice and ascended the rigging more carefully. Porgy showed him how to climb out on the dizzy futtock shrouds and so reach the foretop.

"Goodness!" exclaimed Johnny; "what a breeze there is up here."

"It are the back draught out o' the foretops'l," said Porgy. "Howsumever, it are werry comfortin' on a hot mornin'."

The old seaman now took a long, sweeping survey of the horizon, and then, settling himself comfortably with his back against the mast, said:

"That are a werry clean prospect, as the widder used to remark arter she'd washed my

face, w'ich it were generally not werry clean afore she done so."

"I suppose you've been at sea all your life," said Johnny.

"Oh, no," said Porgy, gravely; "I were a babby for sev'ral year, an' babbies ain't no sort o' use aboard ship."

"Of course," rejoined Johnny, with a laugh, "but I mean after that."

"Well, arter I got done bein' a babby, my son, the widder she sent me to school. I didn't larn a great deal, 'ceptin' one thing, an' I larned that fust-rate; an' that were that I didn't like school."

"A good many boys don't like school," said Johnny; "but it seems that they have to go just the same."

"It are a necessary evil," observed Porgy, with much solemnity; "that is, it are necessary to them as lives ashore an' them as wants to be orfcers afloat. But it are wholly unnecessary to them as is goin' to be just plain sailors all their lives. An' consekently it were unnecessary fur me."

This sort of philosophy greatly amused Johnny, and for some time he sat in silence studying the appearance of his queer friend. Porgy was short and broad, and his deep

chest and wide shoulders betokened immense strength. His head was habitually bent forward, and his keen gray eyes appeared to be looking continually upward from beneath his shaggy eyebrows. His nose was as round as a plum, and was burned to a fiery red by long exposure to the sun. He had a fringe of iron-gray whiskers under his chin, and it seemed as if he must have some inside his throat, too, for his voice was always husky.

"And after you decided that school was unnecessary for you, Porgy," continued Johnny, "what did you do?"

"I perceded to ship on a coalin' schooner w'ich were said to be bound fur Philadelphia. Howsumever, as the widder used to say, there's often a good many kinds o' weather atwixt sunrise an' dinner-time, an' the aforesaid schooner, 'stead o' goin' to Philadelphia, went to pieces on a reef wot werry improperly got in her way. I were the only survivin' member o' her crew, an' bein' ashore I fell in with a sailor an' so I got another berth. This time I were shipped on a whaler bound fur the west coast o' Greenland. Wal, my son, wotever ye do, don't go up there, 'cos it ain't no sort o' country fur civilized humans. It are only fit fur Eskimo dogs an' pelicans. Our ship got

caught in the ice an' were squoze into small flinders; an' this here pertikler sailor man wot you're a-talkin' to floated fur seven days on a ton o' ice. An' it were not no warm weather, either."

"And how were you rescued?" asked Johnny.

"Oh, I were rescued all right by a party o' Eskimos wot was out seal-huntin' an' thort I were a seal till they got close up to me, an' then they took me ashore an' fed me on fat an' fried taller candles an' sich things. Oh, I've had lots o' fun at sea."

"What's that? Isn't that a sail?" suddenly asked Johnny, pointing at a tiny white speck on the horizon.

"Yes, it surely are," answered Porgy. "Sing it out, my lad; you seed it, you know."

"Must I?"

"O' course. Wot else you up here fur?"

"Sail ho-o-o!" cried Johnny, in a clear, high voice.

"Where away?" came the short, sharp demand from the deck. Johnny was taken by surprise, and, before he thought of consulting Porgy, he answered:

"Oh—oh—it's very far away, sir."

The burst of suppressed laughter that rose

from the forecastle showed Johnny that he had made a blunder, and he looked appealingly at Porgy, who whispered to him.

"Two points off the weather bow, I mean, sir," called Johnny.

"Who's up there with you?" demanded the officer of the watch.

"Lynn, sir," answered Porgy.

"Well, you keep an eye on that sail, and let me know what you make of it."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered Porgy, relapsing into silence.

Johnny sat and held his peace for half an hour, when suddenly Porgy said:

"You ain't never rightly explained to me why you runned away to sea, my son."

"I didn't intend to run away to sea, Porgy. In fact I never had any idea of going to sea when I left home—that is, my guardian's house."

Johnny then told Porgy for the first time the history of the little smoking-party in his room at the Tuzo High School, with all the subsequent developments.

"An' so here you are, a 'prentice on one o' Uncle Sam's wessels, a-standin' your fust mornin' watch in the foretop, an' all 'cos you wasn't a good hand at makin' apolergies, eh? Wal, as

the widder used to say, I like grit s' long as 'tain't in sugar."

"Thank you, Porgy," said Johnny; "but I must admit that if I could get possession of my money, I'd not be here."

"How much money are it?"

"That's what I don't know."

"Don't any one know 'ceptin' your guardian?"

"Yes, the president and the cashier of the Sancet Bank must know, because that's where it was put."

"Wal, I s'pose them's honest men."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Then I reckon, as long as your guardeen's been told you're alive, them fellers won't let him rob you."

"I think you must be right about that, Porgy," said Johnny, hopefully; "and when I am of age I'll be able to get my money."

"'Less your guardeen does one thing."

"And what's that?"

"Never show nobody the letter wot you writ from Boston."

"That would be bad," said Johnny, thoughtfully. "Every one would think I was drowned then."

"Yes, an' your guardeen would take possession o' the money, and ef you was to go back

to Sancet, you'd have to prove, fust of all, that you was really John Rodgers an' hadn't never been dead at all."

"Perhaps I could even do that, though," said Johnny. "The officers and crew of this ship could all testify to picking me up off Sancet, and to my telling them my story, and the Captain knows about the letter and——"

"Yes," interrupted Porgy, "an' we're just a-goin' off on a cruise, an' it are war-time; an' mebbe most on us'll never come back, an' by the time the war are over we may be all dead or scattered. I reckon I wouldn't count too much on gettin' that there money, ef I was you. You got a good berth here. In a few months you'll be an ord'nary seaman, an' arter that you'll get to be an A. B. an'——"

"What's an A. B.?"

"Able-bodied seaman, my son."

"Well, Porgy, I suppose I'm here and I must make the best of it. I mean to work hard and get ahead in this business as fast as I can, for I like the sea and ships. But if you think I'm going to give up all hope of getting my money, you just don't know me, that's all."

"Bully for you, my lad!" exclaimed Porgy. "That's the sort o' talk I like."

At that moment the clear musical chime of the forecastle bell rang out the four double strokes that told the close of the watch, and the next instant the boy known as Miss Mittykins sprang lightly into the foretop, followed at a more deliberate pace by the powerful negro, Scipio.

"We're your relief," said Miss Mittykins.

"Then down we goes," said Porgy.

"Mayn't I stay up here awhile?" asked Johnny.

"Yes, I s'pose so," said Porgy. "It's your watch below; but I guess it's all right."

And Johnny stayed on in the foretop, because he liked Miss Mittykins.

CHAPTER XII

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING

"WHAT do you make of that sail, Mittykins?" said Johnny.

"Miss" Mittykins gravely turned his eyes in the direction indicated just in time to detect a column of light-blue smoke.

"I don't quite know," he said, shaking his tangled hair; "what do you think, Scip?"

"Smoke's putty light," said Scip, letting his voice swell into a roar of "Steamer on the weather-bow!"

"Is that the sail that was reported half an hour ago?" asked the officer of the deck.

"Yes, sah."

"Keep a close watch on it."

"Aye, aye, sah!"

"What do you think about it, Scipio?"

"I dunno 'zackly, chile, but she mought be one o' dem Johnnies."

"Johnnies? What are they?" asked Johnny, in surprise.

"Johnny Rebs, chile. You'll done know 'em

'fore you sarb yo' time out, suah. Umph-umph!" exclaimed Scipio, shaking his head and rolling his eyes most expressively.

"She's coming down on us pretty fast under steam and sail," said Miss Mittykins.

"An' I don' like de set o' dem r'yal yards a bit," muttered Scipio, and he once more shouted:

"On deck, dar!"

"What is it?"

"She's a-risin' fast, sah, undah steam an' sail."

"Very good. I see her plainly now."

Another half-hour passed and the strange ship was not more than eight miles away. Captain Barker and Mr. Freeman had come on deck and were gazing earnestly at the stranger.

"I'm afraid there's no doubt about her, Freeman," said the Captain. "I wish it would breeze up a little more."

"This breeze would do, sir, if we could bring it a little more abeam."

"True enough. Mr. Wilson."

"Sir," answered the Master, who was close at hand.

"Can't we let her off a point and put the royals on her?"

"That will bring us very close aboard the

cape, sir, but with that fellow out yonder, I think we may risk it."

"Ease your helm there," said the Captain to the man at the wheel, while the Master shouted:

"Overhaul the lee braces! Aloft and loose the royals! Clear away the flying jib! Let fall! Sheet home and hoist away!"

For a few minutes there was a rush of activity aloft, and then, as the Mohawk's head fell off and her newly spread canvas filled with the breeze, she heeled a trifle more and began to hurl silvery spouts of spray from her forefoot.

"Let me know her speed, Mr. Wilson," said the Captain.

The log was hove and the ship was found to be making ten knots an hour.

"I don't think yonder fellow can catch us before we get the cover of the cape, if the wind holds," said the Captain.

"It looks likely to freshen a bit, I think, sir," said Mr. Freeman.

The three watchers in the foretop were silent for a quarter of an hour, and then Scipio began to shake with laughter.

"What's the matter with you, Scip?" demanded Miss Mittykins.

"De high golly!" exclaimed the negro, "ef de ole Mohawk don' clean run away f'm 'er!"

"Well," said Johnny, "I don't see why we don't wait for her and fight her. Isn't that our business?"

"Not allus, chile; not allus," replied Scipio. "'Times it's ouah business to go on 'tendin' to ouah business an' not get inter trouble wid folks wot's suah to lick us, an' dis hyah's one o' dem dar times, chile, 'deed it is. Umph-umph!"

"The breeze is freshening," said Miss Mittykins, taking off his cap and letting the air play with his curls.

"Dat's wot's de mattah!" exclaimed Scipio, hugging himself in delight.

"I don't think we ought to run away," said Johnny.

"Yo' know bettah 'n dat some day, chile. 'Sides, I reckon yo' done git all the fight yo' want yit."

The rebel ship was now plainly falling astern and the Mohawk bounded across the white-crested ridges like the stanch old sailing vessel that she was. It was two days later, however, when the sweet, clear voice of Mlle. de Calaveras was heard floating down from the foretop:

"Land ho-o-o!"

Hampton Roads was the scene of some desperate fighting in the early days of the war,

when the mail-clad Merrimac had hurled terror and destruction upon the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron until the "cheese-box on a raft," the famous Monitor, stole around the capes and changed the whole nature of modern sea-fighting. But in 1864, when the Mohawk sailed in from the Atlantic, the Roads were as peaceful as they are to-day. The Union fleet was at work farther down the coast and only a small squadron of four or five unimportant vessels was lying at anchor under the guns of Fort Monroe.

"I wonder what we're here for," said Johnny, as he leaned against the rail and gazed at the fresh green of the shores.

"I don't know any more than you do," said Meredith, who was at his side; "but the Captain has gone to call on the senior officer of the fleet, and we'll soon know a thing or two."

"I'd like to go ashore," said Johnny.

"Poor chance of that," said Meredith, "unless we are to take on stores here, and then you may get more shore-work than you wish for."

"Here comes the boat back," exclaimed Johnny.

The Captain's gig, urged by eight brawny seamen, was dancing across the shifting windrows of the harbor at a merry speed. The

moment she reached the foot of the accommodation ladder Captain Barker sprang to the deck and sent for his First Lieutenant. Ten minutes later Mr. Freeman emerged from the Captain's cabin and gave an order to the officer of the deck. The next minute the ship resounded with the screeching of the boatswain's pipe and the hoarse order:

"Away all boats!"

"That's what I suspected," said Meredith, as he sprang to his station. Aboard the Mohawk one of the whale-boats had been assigned to the younger apprentices with an old hand as stroke, so that Johnny, Meredith, Mlle. de Calaveras, Miss Mittykins, and Porgy, by using a little influence with the boatswain, found themselves billeted together.

"Are we going to get stores?" asked Johnny, as he cast off the forward stopper.

"That's what it is," answered Mlle. de Calaveras, who was in the bow.

"Then we'll get a chance to stretch our legs ashore."

"Yes, but I don't care about that. The deck of a ship is world enough for me."

"How long have you been at sea?"

"Ever since I was born, I think," answered Mlle. de Calaveras, with a grave smile.

"Stand by to lower away!" exclaimed Porgy, gruffly.

"Growl, you old bear; but you won't bite," said Miss Mittykins, laughing.

The whale-boat was quickly lowered, and the young midshipman, George Crewes, who commanded her, gave the orders that set the five willing backs swinging in rhythmic unison. The whale-boat fell into her proper place in the column of boats, and after five minutes of smart pulling ran alongside the wharf.

"Rodgers, boat-keeper," said Mr. Crewes, sharply. "Tumble out the rest of you."

Johnny, left alone in the boat, rubbed his arms as he said to himself:

"I don't see why they make the oars so long and heavy. I'm used to rowing, but not with such beams."

"Now, then," called Porgy, from the wharf above, "stand by to take this 'ere stuff an' put it where I tells you."

The other members of the crew came down the wharf with bags and small boxes, which were passed down to Johnny and stowed by him as directed by Porgy. The crews of the other boats were all engaged in similar labor. As soon as a boat was loaded, she pulled off to the ship, put her cargo aboard, and returned.

Johnny did not find it easy work, and he was unable to see just how he was to get an opportunity to go ashore, though he was certainly stretching his limbs to his heart's content. For five hours, except at dinner-time, the crew labored like a lot of pack-horses, and Johnny decided, without any hesitation whatever, that a sailor's life was not what the authors of sea-stories made it out to be. But when the last load of stores had gone into the whale-boat, Midshipman Crewes said:

"Lynn, you're not a boy; you sit in the boat and smoke a pipe, while these youngsters spend ten minutes ashore."

"Thank you, sir," said Meredith, speaking for the crew. "Come along, boys."

The four young sailors ran along the wharf to the shore, the graceful and agile Mlle. de Calaveras leading the way. Their time was short enough, to be sure, but they enjoyed every minute of it.

"How good the grass smells!" exclaimed Johnny.

"It isn't bad, is it?" exclaimed Miss Mittykins, lying down and rolling over in it.

"Oh, it's good once in awhile for a change," said Mlle. de Calaveras. "But I like the smell of the sea-weed better."

"Oh, there's something wrong about you!" exclaimed Meredith.

"Hello! There goes the call," said Miss Mittykins. "Come on, I'll beat you all back to the boat."

Away the four boys went as fast as their nimble legs would carry them, dodging sailors, soldiers, marines, and landsmen who were crowding the pier. Johnny was last in the race, and just as he reached the end of the wharf he ran into a tall young man in the uniform of a marine. With his hand still on the string-piece of the pier and his feet in the boat, Johnny turned to utter a hasty apology, but instead stared blankly into the marine's face until sharply ordered to sit down in the boat.

The marine was Morton Brewer.

CHAPTER XIII

DRILLING A MARINE

JOHNNY mechanically took his place in the boat and obeyed orders. But his mind was in a whirl of amazement, and just as soon as he was aboard the ship and had an opportunity to talk he unburdened himself to his friends.

"Did you see a marine standing on the end of the pier?" he said.

"I didn' see no marines," said Porgy; "I never sees 'em 'cos they ain't worth seein'."

"I saw him," said Miss Mittykins.

"And so did I," said Meredith. "You ran into him."

"Yes, and I don't know what to make of it."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Meredith.

"It was the son of my guardian; it was Morton Brewer," said Johnny.

"Whew!" exclaimed Meredith and Mittykins.

"Them as goes to sea," said Porgy, solemnly, "is bound to meet the unexpected."

"But I wonder what he's doing here," exclaimed Johnny, "and how on earth did he come to be a marine?"

"Them is questions," said Porgy, "w'ich can't be answered at present, as the widder said w'en they axed her how old she were."

"Oh, blow the widow!" exclaimed Miss Mittykins. "Johnny will find out all about it some day, and so what's the use of worrying now?"

They were all destined to learn the facts much sooner than they dreamed of, for the following morning, just before it was time for the Mohawk to get under way, a shore-boat came off with six marines, needed to make up the ship's complement, and one of them was Morton Brewer. Johnny saw him come aboard and go below, but had no opportunity to speak to him, for almost immediately the boatswain piped all hands to get the ship under way, and the boy hastened to his station.

"Man the bars; heave round! 'Vast heaving! Aloft sail-loosers! Lay out and loose! Man topsail sheets and halyards! Let fall! Sheet home!"

Mr. Freeman's orders rang out from the quarter deck, and in a very short time the ship was at short cable with her topsails set. Then

the yards were braced sharp up, the anchor weighed, and the jib and flying jib run up. The Mohawk's head fell off and, her sails filling, she stood for the sea close-hauled on the port tack. A fine sailing-breeze was blowing and the top-gallants were set at once. The ship rushed forward, gallantly shouldering the short green seas, and the crew settled down for a short interval of rest. It was then that Morton Brewer came on deck with his hands in his pockets and a pipe in his mouth and stared complacently about him. He had no fear of sea-sickness, for he was accustomed to the water. Presently he caught sight of Johnny and approached him. He took a calm look at the boy, blew a cloud of smoke into his face, and said:

"I thought it was you that ran into me on the pier."

"Yes," said Johnny, "and I suppose you must have been almost as much surprised as I was."

"Oh, I don't know," said Morton. "I never supposed you were drowned, though father did. I knew you weren't good enough to drown."

"But didn't he get my letter from Boston?"

"Letter? I never heard of any letter."

"I wrote him one," said Johnny, thinking that after all Porgy was right in supposing that his guardian would conceal the letter. "But, Morton, how comes it that you are here, as a marine, too?"

"I don't know that I'm under any obligation to explain my conduct to a common sailor," replied Morton, superciliously.

Both Porgy and Mlle. de Calaveras had approached near enough to hear this last speech. Now if there is one human being that a sailor regards with contempt, it is a marine. So when Porgy heard Morton's words, he was simply speechless with amazement. But Mlle. de Calaveras walked up to Morton, looked up into his face and burst into a silvery peal of laughter.

"What are you laughing at, you young monkey?" exclaimed Morton, angrily. "I'll teach you better manners."

Porgy Lynn, with blazing eyes, strode forward and, laying the grip of a vice upon Morton's shoulder, said:

"Young man, I reckon you're putty igner'nt; but don't you go fur to lay your han's on any boy aboard o' this 'ere ship, or you'll git some teachin' wot'll make your ribs sore."

Morton looked at the powerful frame of the sailor, and deemed it best not to make any reply; but as soon as Porgy released him, he walked sullenly away.

"That there youngster are a-goin' to travel a hard road here," said Porgy.

"Don't be too hard on him," said Johnny, "he doesn't know any better."

"I'm afraid he'll have to learn," said Mlle. de Calaveras. "Landsmen all have to go to school out here."

The Mohawk was far out at sea, with a soft breeze on her port quarter, when the dog-watches came around that day. Skylarking was of a very moderate kind, for the ship was off the enemy's coast now, and might at any moment fall in with a foe. Yet after supper Johnny's friends and several other seamen who had noted the airy manner of young Brewer determined to give him a lesson, and as he was about to go on deck, Scipio touched him on the shoulder.

"Ah bin 'p'inted to gib yo' some 'struc-tions," he said.

"Take your hand off," said Morton, "I don't take instructions from a nigger."

"Yo' done gwine ter take 'em from dis niggah, suah," said Scipio.

"Nigger!" exclaimed Meredith, who was at hand; "we don't like such words here."

"I don't care what you common sailors like," retorted Morton.

"An' we don' care wot de marines like," exclaimed Scipio, seizing him by the collar and running him forward, where he suddenly found himself in the middle of a circle of seamen. They were seated on the deck, most of them smoking their black pipes, and they gazed at him gravely as he struggled helplessly in the powerful grasp of the negro.

"Him done call me niggah!" said Scipio.

"Then the cullud barbers ort to shave him," remarked a seaman.

"Aye, aye!" cried the men.

In a few seconds, despite his struggles, Morton had been seized by Scipio and three other colored sailors and firmly bound. They seated him on a chest and Scipio solemnly lathered his face with a whitewash brush and a bucket containing a mixture of sour paste, soft soap, and salt water. He applied the lather vigorously and rubbed it in with no gentle touch, while the sailors shook with laughter. Next Scipio drew his jackknife and proceeded to scrape the lather off, every stroke of the rude razor drawing forth a groan of protest from

the helpless Morton. Having finished this operation, Scipio, with a serious face and an air of mock deference, said :

“Shampoo, sah?”

“No, thank you,” answered Morton, rather meekly.

“Please don’t let them do anything more to him,” whispered Johnny to Mlle. de Calaveras, who sat beside him.

“I wouldn’t interfere for the ship’s pay,” replied the boy, airily. “He must learn.”

“Porgy,” pleaded Johnny, “let him off now. It’s awful nasty, you know.”

Porgy stood up and raised his hand. There was a cessation of activities and all were silent.

“Gen’lemen o’ the port watch seamen’s protective association,” he began. “I reckon this ’ere young cross atween a soldier an’ a gale o’ wind are larnt his fust lesson, w’ich are respect fur them as doesn’t wear brass buttons an’ does know the difference atwixt a frigate an’ a freight-car. I move as how we now lets him off with the warnin’ that fu’ther ignerance on his part will call fur fu’ther teachin,’ and the lessons don’t get no easier as ye go ahead in the book. But afore we does let him off, I move that he’s requested fur to tell us how he came to be a marine?”

"Aye, aye! Good! Good!"

Morton looked for an avenue of escape, but he was still bound and helpless.

"Well," he said, "if you must know, the day after Johnny Rodgers was kicked out of the Tuzo School——"

"Requested to leave, my son, you mean," said Miss Mittykins, while the sailors burst into roars of laughter.

"Well, if you like it that way," growled Morton; "requested to leave, the fellows acted so nasty to me that I punched Barney Free's head. While I was doing it, old Durand came up and tried to pull us apart. I was so mad that I hit him and knocked him down. He stayed down and I found he was badly hurt in falling. I skipped for home and told the old man, and he turned sour on me and said he'd give me up to the police. So I ran away, went to New York and enlisted."

"But wot made you 'list in the marines?" demanded Porgy.

"I didn't know I was enlisting in a sea-regiment. I just went into the first recruiting place I saw; and a sweet mess I made of it."

"I dunno about that," said Porgy. "You jist remember that we don't allow no callin' ugly names, an' we don't want no high airs

from any bloomin' marines, an' pertiklerly we don't intend to let you make this 'ere ship on-pleasant fur this 'ere boy, John Rodgers. You remember all them things, an' as the widder used to say, you won't find no salt in your bed in this 'ere world."

"If it hadn't been for John Rodgers," exclaimed Morton, "I'd have been at school yet."

"And if it hadn't been for you, Morton," said Johnny, calmly, "I certainly should have been there."

"That's it," said Porgy, "you're quits, an' mind you let that boy alone an' gen'rally an' pertiklerly mind your own business. Untie him."

"I'll complain to the Captain about this business," said Morton, as he stretched his limbs once more.

"I wish you would," said Mlle. de Calaveras, with so much meaning that Morton walked silently away.

CHAPTER XIV

OFF MOBILE BAY

"WHERE are we going?" asked Johnny of Mlle. de Calaveras the next morning as they were coiling down some running rigging in the morning watch.

"I don't know," answered Mlle. de Calaveras, gazing out over the sea with dancing, happy eyes. "I never know; I never care. As long as we are under way and at sea I am happy."

Johnny hardly comprehended the nature of this strange boy, so much like a graceful girl in face and movement, and yet so agile, strong and manly in body and so brave and cheerful in spirit.

"Where were you born?" asked Johnny.

"Out yonder somewhere," answered the boy, pointing toward the eastern horizon.

"At sea?"

"Yes, at sea, aboard the ship Calaveras. And that's where they found me when the cowardly crew of Lascars had abandoned the

vessel after a storm, and left my poor mother aboard to sink with me in her arms. But the Calaveras floated, water-logged, and my mother died for want of drink. But I was saved by the Mohawk. And here I have lived ever since."

"What! A baby aboard a man-o'-war?"

"Yes, and the dearest and best and kindest nurses in the world are those lads there. They've been all the mother I've ever known, and the ship was my cradle."

"But you don't talk as they do."

"The ship's schoolmaster and some of the midshipmen educated me. But there—don't let us talk about me any more. I've told you a good deal because—because you're an honest boy."

Mlle. de Calaveras gave Johnny a gentle, loving look and then went on with his work in silence.

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The August sun was beating down upon the shimmering blue sea with pitiless rays that were tempered only by the soft breathing of a light northeasterly breeze. The Mohawk was sweeping majestically southward and westward, clothed to her trucks with snow-white

canvas, spreading far out over her rails on the lean arms of the studding-sail booms and rising between her masts in the spherical triangles of the swelling stay-sails. Light as the wind was, it drove the well-modelled fabric forward at the rate of six knots an hour, and kept the white mounds of foam singing merrily under her iron-shod forefoot. The deck gleamed a golden yellow in the gorgeous sunlight, the brass-work sparkled like gold in the mint, and the brown chases of the bulbous guns glittered joyously in the square ports. There was little work to do, for it was a fair wind and a long watch and the jib-boom pointing the course. The officer of the deck paced slowly up and down in the grateful shade of the mainsail. The Captain and the Master were sitting on the poop in earnest conversation. Forward, half a hundred bronzed and grizzled sea-dogs sprawled about the deck at odd jobs of mending clothing or splicing lines. Before the cabin-door, a marine stood like a graven image, save that he gently swayed with the long, slow roll of the ship. But despite all this seeming ease, aloft were double lookouts, keenly alert, for they watched for the man-o'-war's two worst foes—the enemy and the land.

“I'd just give a fair dollar to know where

we're going," said Johnny, who was lying at full length on the forecastle deck.

"I think I've heard you say that before," said Meredith, with a laugh.

"What does it matter so long as we go?" asked Mlle. de Calaveras, who was lying on his back and gazing dreamily up among the dazzling arches of the creamy canvas. "It is when the ship lies at anchor, with a bit in her teeth and the four walls of a harbor-prison around her, that I grow weary; but never out here where there are no boundaries and no rest."

"Don't mind him," whispered Meredith; "he talks like a ghost sometimes."

"But," protested Johnny, "suppose we are going to fight?"

"We fight the gales sometimes," said Mlle. de Calaveras, "and I like that well enough. But the other—that is full of blood. Ugh! I shall not like that."

"Do you think he'll show the white feather?" whispered Johnny.

"He!" answered Meredith. "Never! He's absolutely ignorant of the meaning of fear. I don't understand him, with his baby face, his girl's form, and his queer talk. But I know he's strong and brave and true, and I——"

"Land ho!" came the hoarse call from the foretop, and with a simultaneous spring all hands were on their feet.

"Where away?" cried Mr. Truxton.

"Dead ahead, sir."

"It's too early for us to be running in with the land, isn't it?" asked the Captain.

"No, sir; no," answered Master Thomas Wilson, "there's naught to fear off the mouth of Jupiter Inlet, and I doubt much whether we should find the light burning at night."

"True, true," said the Captain, "I sometimes forget that these shores are now an enemy's. Ah me, Mr. Wilson, what will be the end of this war of a nation against itself?"

"I doubt not, sir," said the Master, "that it is for some wise purpose that we poor mortals cannot see, and that when it is all over, our country will be better and stronger than ever before."

"Well said, Wilson. Yes, I do believe the matter is in God's hands. Mr. Truxton."

"Sir?"

"Keep her as she goes till you get the lighthouse well raised, and then Mr. Wilson will change the course."

"Aye, aye, sir."

This conversation was not heard by the men

forward, but an old seaman who came down from aloft expressed his opinion.

"We be'n a-sailin' about sou'-sou'west since we left Hatteras, an' ef that ain't the Floridy coast, why blow me!"

That was an anxious night, for the ship entered the Florida channel, studded with reefs, besieged by a restless and vicious current, and too narrow to admit of far flight in case of an enemy's appearance.

"We're bound fur the Gulf," said Porgy Lynn; "that are plainer'n the mole on the widder's cheek, an' that war putty bloomin' plain, too, an' ye didn't need no chart to locate it. But s'posin' we are bound inter the Gulf, wot then? D'ye know any more'n ye did afore? I reckon not. 'Cos w'y: mebbe ye're goin' to Noo Orleens, an' mebbe ye ain't. An' ye can't tell nothin' 'bout it nohow, as the widder said w'en they axed her would she ever get married ag'in."

The Mohawk slowly and steadily threaded her way through the channel and at length was clear of the westerly end of the Tortugas.

"An' now, by the great hook block!" exclaimed Porgy Lynn, "I know where we're a-goin'!"

"Where?" asked all the boys.

"The course are nor'-nor'west, an' that means Mobile."

"But Mobile is a rebel port," objected Miss Mittykins.

"Wal, wal!" exclaimed Porgy, "you're most as knowin' as the widder's cat, wot'd allus look fur milk w'en she seed a saucer on the floor."

"But it *is* a rebel port," said Meredith.

"An' do that signify that it are allus goin' to be one?" demanded Porgy.

"Why, you old shellback!" exclaimed Meredith, "you don't suppose the skipper's going to try to take the town with the Mohawk, do you?"

"Wal, he might help to do it, mightn't he?"

"That's true. Maybe we're going to join a fleet there."

"Wot fur d'ye s'pose we got that there cargo o' stores fur in the Roads?"

"That's it!" exclaimed Miss Mittykins, dancing about delightedly. "We're to join a fleet there, an' then there'll be a regular old shindy!"

"And blood. Ugh!" muttered Mlle. de Calaveras.

Strange thrills began to run through Johnny, and he wondered if he were going to prove a

coward. The days seemed doubly long now that all hands were on the tiptoe of expectation. The blue waters of the Gulf were hungrily scanned for a sign of land, and when at length the lookout gave the expected warning, the whole ship's company assembled on deck. Slowly the Mohawk drew in toward the coast, and at length her people began to make out a small cluster of masts. Night was closing in when these were descried, and presently a twinkling light was seen describing graceful curves aboard one of the ships. A signalman on the Mohawk answered, and then orders to shorten sail were given. An hour later the ship dropped anchor outside the fleet and immediately the order was given to lower away the boats and break out the stores. At the same instant a swift barge shot up alongside the accommodation ladder, and a spruce lieutenant sprang aboard the Mohawk.

"You are come just in time, Captain," he said, as he shook hands with the commander of the Mohawk. "We are going in to-morrow."

"So soon!" exclaimed the Captain. "But my men will get all the stores aboard to-night. I judge you have some word for me from the Admiral. Will you walk into my cabin?"

"Thank you."

And the two officers disappeared from the deck.

"I'd like to know wot Admiral it are," muttered Porgy, who was busy close at hand.

"Well, my ancient bully," said Miss Mittykins, "here's the fellow who can tell you. I heard one of the midshipmen passing the word. It's Farragut."

"Wot! Old Farragut! Then there's a-goin' fur to be one o' the biggest fights ye ever saw; fur he's a fighter. But great Jacob's ladder!"

"What is it?"

"Why, boy, we'll not be in it. Them there ships is all steamers, an' no sailin' ship could run that 'ere channel under fire. Didn't ye see the monitors in nearer the shore?"

"No! Monitors, eh?"

"Yessirree! No, we'll be left out here while other pussons goes in an' has all the fun."

For three hours the crew of the Mohawk worked liked beavers, helped by a score of boats and their crews from the other ships. Then, just as the weary sailors thought that they were about to be sent to rest, the crew was mustered and the names of ten marines and twenty seamen were read, including those of all our friends.

"These men will get their hammocks and

report to Captain Percival Drayton, of the Hartford. They will remain aboard that ship until the action of to-morrow and subsequent operations at this port for which they may be required are ended," were the orders.

"An' wot d'ye think o' that?" said Porgy, with a chuckle, as he dived below to get his hammock and dunnage. But Johnny, to whom his remark was addressed, was too excited to reply. The thought that on the morrow he was to go into his first battle had set every nerve in his body tingling, and his breath to going in sharp, short pants. He got his hammock and dunnage and tumbled into the boat with his friends in a state bordering on hysteria; but he was recalled to his senses by the sweet voice of Mlle. de Calaveras, singing softly:

"An' a sailor he would be!"

"Stow that jaw-tackle there," growled the petty officer in charge of the boat. "You'll not want to sing to-morrow."

The dull click of the oars in the rowlocks was all that was heard until the boat reached the port ladder of the Hartford and the men boarded her. They were quickly assigned to their hammock numbers and learned that they had been brought aboard not because the ves-

sel was shorthanded, but because the great Admiral expected that they would be needed to fill vacancies caused by the morrow's fight. A heavy rain was falling when Johnny and his companions went on deck to take a look about them before turning in. It was a black night and the twinkling lights of the sombre ships, as they swung restlessly at their arched cables, made the damp gloom more impressive. Not a sound could be heard from the shore, but all hands knew that the shotted guns of Fort Morgan lay ready to hurl death and devastation upon any ship that ventured within their range. Around the Hartford lay a fleet more powerful than the combined English, Spanish, and French forces at Trafalgar. In the Hartford's cabin Farragut sat writing to his wife.

"I am going into Mobile in the morning if God is my leader, as I hope he is, and in Him I place my trust. If He thinks it is the place for me to die, I am ready to submit to His will."

"What's that out yonder?" whispered Johnny.

"Fog," answered Porgy, shortly. "Might as well turn in. We'll see nothin' more this night an' we got to see a good deal in the mornin'."

A great gray curtain of writhing mist swept

in from the Gulf and shut the fleet within its folds. Johnny went to his hammock, jumped in, and tried to sleep. But how could he on the eve of his first battle?

CHAPTER XV

"AN AUGUST MORNING WITH FARRAGUT"

AT 5.30 on the morning of August 5th, Farragut, sipping his tea in his cabin, said to the Captain of the Hartford:

"Well, Drayton, we might as well get under way."

Mobile was the second port in importance to the Confederates, and when New Orleans fell, in 1862, they made up their minds to prepare for the defense of the Alabama city. Consequently on that memorable August morning, when Farragut's fleet prepared to force an entrance to the bay, the enemy was ready to meet him. The narrow and crooked channel passes between two points, inside of which the bay opens to a capacious sheet of water. On the westerly point stood Fort Gaines, garrisoned by nearly nine hundred men and heavily armed. On the easterly point was Fort Morgan, built of brick walls nearly five feet thick and protected by piles of sand-bags. Its forty guns were formidable, and there were six hun-

dred and forty brave men in the citadel. From Fort Gaines to the edge of the ship-channel ran a double line of heavy stakes. Across the ship-channel to a point three hundred feet from the muzzles of Fort Morgan's guns ran a double row of torpedoes ready to explode at a touch.

Inside the bay, with steam up, lay the terrible ram Tennessee. Her casemate, inside of which were her five powerful guns, was of solid oak and Georgia pine twenty-five inches thick, sheathed with from five to six inches of iron plating. Besides this almost invulnerable craft there were three partly armored gun-boats, the Morgan, the Gaines, and the Selma, mounting in all sixteen guns.

The Union fleet was one of great strength. It consisted of the Hartford, the Brooklyn, the Richmond, the Monongahela, the Ossipee, and the Oneida, war-steamers mounting from eight to twenty guns each; the gun-boats Octorara, Metacomet, Port Royal, Seminole, Kennebec, Itasca, and Galena, the last carrying ten and the others five to eight guns each; and the single-turreted monitors Tecumseh, Manhattan, Winnebago, and Chickasaw. The Union force looked on paper far more powerful than the Confederate. But it had before it the terrible undertaking of steaming in column through

a narrow and unknown channel, beset with over a hundred torpedoes, any one of them capable of destroying a vessel, directly under the guns of Fort Morgan and at an appallingly short range. The chances were five to one that not half the fleet would reach the inner waters, where lay the dread ram, a match for a score of wooden ships.

But the great heart of Farragut never faltered, and when he went on deck on the morning of August 5th, his calm resolute face sent a thrill of determination through every man. Johnny Rodgers learned his first hero-worship at that moment, and nothing that the Admiral afterward did gave him any surprise, for, boy as he was, he felt that he was in the presence of a giant.

"Look," he said to Porgy, "the Metacomet is coming up on our port side."

"Yes," answered Porgy, "the ships are ago-in' in lashed together two by two, so as 't ef one gets her engines smashed t'other'll tow her."

Each of the larger ships now made a gun-boat fast on her port side, and at the same instant the Union flag was run up to every mast-head in the fleet. The armor-clad monitors formed in single column on the right of the

ships, and the fleet slowly moved forward. The crews were at their stations for general quarters, and Johnny noticed that many of the grim old warriors were stripped to the waist. The Brooklyn, with the Octorara, led the way, the Hartford and the Metacomet following. There was dead silence on the flagship's deck. Only the voice of the leadsman was heard mechanically chanting:

"A quarter less four! and a half three!"

With tremor after tremor of nervous excitement coursing over his body, Johnny, who had been detailed as an extra powder-boy, stood by the hatch and let his eyes drink in the scene. McFarland, Wood, and Jassin, standing at the wheel, behind a breastwork of hammocks, looked like bronze statues. Captain Drayton, with arms folded and chin lowered, gazed intently ahead from his post on the quarter-deck, where he was attended by Lieutenant John Crittenden Watson, Lieutenant Arthur Reid Yates, Ensign Henry Howard Brownell, and Signal Quartermaster Knowles. The last-named riveted a steady gaze aloft. There in the port main-shrouds, nearly thirty feet above the deck, stood the Admiral, where Knowles afterward lashed him, with his calm, resolute face glowing with patriot blood, and his dark

uniform cut in clear silhouette against the bright blue sky. He little knew that he was making an immortal picture.

"I wish it would begin," muttered Johnny, feverish with anxiety.

"Aye, and so does every heart in the ship, I fancy," said a low, gentle voice.

Johnny turned and saw Mlle. de Calaveras, hatless and with fair hair streaming to the wind, with scarlet roses in his cheeks and flames in his gentle eyes. Johnny all his life long remembered the sweet, wild face of the boy as he saw it that August morning.

"Silence, there!" said the division officer in a sharp whisper. The monitors had now swung across the channel and were closing on Fort Morgan.

Boom! Boom!

The Tecumseh had fired two shots and the shells exploded over the fort. The battle was on. Yet again there was silence for a quarter of an hour.

"They must be up to some durned trick," muttered Porgy.

As if in denial of his words, a red tongue of flame sprang from the fort, followed by another and another. Great geysers of swirling foam shot up around the Brooklyn as the shells fell.

"Look," said Johnny, "she's answering!"

The Brooklyn's bow-guns began to thunder.

"Ready with No. 1 starboard," rang the sudden order along the Hartford's deck, and Johnny's heart jumped into his mouth as he realized that he was now in action. The flagship opened fire, and for a time Johnny moved as one in a wild nightmare. He was dimly conscious that he heard the horrible shrieking of shells as they rushed over the ship; that the ram Tennessee and her companions had moved out and were pouring a terrific fire upon the flagship; that one shell had struck the foremast and another the maintopmast; that splinters were flying in clouds; that men were panting, pushing, hauling, swearing, praying at the great hot guns around him; that some of them were falling down with fearful cries and that something dark, red, and slippery was flowing along the deck; that Mlle. de Calaveras, laughing like a child with a new toy, had seized the lanyard from the hand of a falling gunner and fired the shot himself; that Meredith and Miss Mittykins were as black as negroes with powder-stains; that Porgy was mumbling and grumbling about the widow; that Morton Brewer was loading and firing his rifle blindly; and that over all was a great,

stifling, strangling cloud of sulphurous smoke. But somehow he did his duty and kept the powder going.

And now there was a momentary lull in the firing, for the *Tecumseh* was drawing near the Tennessee and it was plain that the ram was waiting for the monitor. Was there to be another Monitor and Merrimac fight? That question was soon answered. A heavy, dull, muffled explosion was heard, and a mountain of water shot into the air. The *Tecumseh* careened far over, showing a terrible rent in her side. She had struck a torpedo. Her stern rose into the air, the propeller revolving wildly, and with the Stars and Stripes streaming to the wind, she went down bow first, taking with her ninety-three out of a crew of one hundred and fourteen men. A groan went through the whole fleet, followed by cheers from the Confederate fort. At the same instant the Brooklyn and Octorara stopped and backed, and signals began to fly.

"They've seed the torpedoes!" exclaimed Porgy.

"Look!" cried Johnny, "they're turning right across our bows!"

"By the great hook-block!" said Porgy, "the forts are a-rakin' of 'em fore an' aft!"

It was true. The whole line was thrown into confusion, and destruction loomed over the Union fleet. The Confederates, brave and alert and skilful in war, saw their opportunity and poured in a terrific fire. The fort was a living sheet of flame, and the decks of the Hartford and the other ships ran blood. Yet the grimy, blood-stained seamen stood to their tasks like heroes.

"We'll never get in!" exclaimed Meredith. "It's all up with us."

"We will get in!" cried Mlle. de Calaveras in a clear soprano that reached even the ears of the Admiral aloft. "We will get in! We *must*!"

"What's the matter with the Brooklyn?" cried the Admiral; "she must have plenty of water there."

"Plenty and to spare," was the answer.

"It ain't water she wants," muttered Porgy; "it's sand!"

"She signals," cried Knowles, "that there is a heavy line of torpedoes ahead."

For an instant the great Admiral looked toward the Brooklyn with an expression of unutterable disdain, and then his lips parted in the one profane speech of his life—a speech that has become immortal:

“Damn the torpedoes! Go ahead, Captain Drayton! Four bells!”

The Hartford sprang forward like a hound from the leash. A storm of mighty cheers burst from the Union fleet, and following their dauntless leader the vessels rushed on, filling the air with flame and thunder.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LAST OF THE TENNESSEE

"WE got to go west o' that red buoy," said Porgy, pausing a moment to wipe the perspiration out of his eyes; "the Brooklyn's right in the channel."

"What of it?" asked Johnny.

"That's where them torpedoes is."

The same thought seemed to pass through the whole crew at the same time and every face grew set and white. But as the flagship sped onward and passed safely over the torpedoes, some of which were heard scraping along her bottom, all hands realized that one of the boldest exploits in naval history had been accomplished, and a storm of cheers rose above the awful din of war. The remaining ships of the fleet, realizing that the flagship and her consort were now alone above the forts, exposed to the attack of the powerful ram and the gunboats, bent every energy to follow; but they had been thrown into such disorder by the Brooklyn's stopping that they were a long time in getting themselves disentangled.

"Here comes the ram!" exclaimed Meredith.

"An' she are a-goin' to ram us," said Porgy.

As the Tennessee approached she hurled a seven-inch percussion shell into the side of the Hartford, and the shrieks of wounded men from below told of its horrible work. The Hartford rained shot and shell upon the ram, but they fell from her armored sides like peas. On she came like a devouring monster; but a skilful movement of the helm threw the Hartford and the Metacomet out of her path. Then she started down the Union column dealing death and devastation on every hand, while the Northern ships shelled her and rammed her in vain. Meanwhile the Hartford was attacked by the three Confederate gunboats. The Selma ran ahead of Farragut's ship up the channel, and kept up a terrible raking fire. And now the Mohawk's contribution to the crew proved its need; for some of the flagship's guns' crews were reduced to half their number. Presently an opportunity came to swing the vessel so that she could get a fair shot at the Gaines.

"Now, lads, a broadside!" cried Captain Drayton.

"This 'ere's wot I calls throwin' physic to

the dogs, as the widder used ter say," cried Porgy, as he jerked the lockstring of his gun and jumped to the port to watch his shot. "A werry putty swaller she are got, too."

A second broadside a little later sent the Gaines aground and deserted under the guns of the fort. Now Farragut ordered his gunboats to chase the enemy's gunboats, and the Metacomet, being cast loose, followed the Selma till she surrendered. The Morgan escaped. And now the Union fleet was inside the bay, and for a time the battle ceased. Officers relaxed their stern expressions and smiled, and men looked around to see who had lost the number of his mess.

"Everybody all right?" asked Porgy.

"I believe so," answered Meredith.

"Nothing the matter with me except that I'm nearly deaf," said Miss Mittykins, with a smile.

"And I am sick with the sight of it all," murmured Mlle. de Calaveras; "but this will be the end."

"How about you?"

"Oh," answered Johnny, "I guess I've been pretty near scared to death; but I'm not hurt."

"Wal," said Porgy, "it don't make no differ-

ence how much you git scared ef you keep on doin' yer dooty."

"Hello!" cried Meredith, "here comes the ram again."

"She are not a-givin' us much time fur refreshments," said Porgy, as he turned to his gun.

Admiral Franklin Buchanan, with the bravery that always characterized the warriors of the Lost Cause, was coming with his ram to fight three monitors and nearly twenty wooden cruisers. Farragut ordered his vessels to try ramming, and gallantly they obeyed; but they might as well have hurled their bows against Marblehead Rock as against the Tennessee while she, at close quarters, sent her massive shells crashing through their wooden sides and filling their decks with fragments of timber and shattered human bodies.

"She's coming at us now!" screamed Johnny, in his excitement.

For a few moments it looked as if the two flagships must meet bows on, which would have meant the sinking of the Hartford; but the Tennessee's steering-gear was not in good order and she simply grazed along her opponent's side, sending in one shell that killed or wounded twelve men. It seemed to Johnny

that he was looking directly into the muzzle of this gun as it was discharged, yet he was held motionless by a kind of fascination. Then he heard a cry near him, and saw Morton Brewer fall from the Hartford's rail, where he had leaped to discharge his musket, and disappear in the swirling water between the two vessels. It was no time to be shouting "man overboard," and no one but Johnny seemed to notice what had happened. For a single instant he hesitated; then, flinging down his powder-box, he bounded through the nearest port into the water. Meredith caught sight of him just as he went, and with an exclamation sprang to the port. The next instant he saw Johnny reappear at the surface near the ram's quarter, supporting with difficulty the unconscious form of Morton.

"Keep up! I'll heave you a line!" screamed Meredith, waving his hand.

Johnny did not hear the words, for the great guns were crashing like thunderbolts above him, but he saw the motion of the hand and it gave him fresh courage. Meredith dashed aft, and seizing a piece of spare tackle, hove the end to the boy. Johnny caught it, and his arm was nearly torn from the socket as he was towed forward by the ship. Still he clenched

his lips and held on with a desperate grip. Meredith, in an agony of anxiety, sprang to Captain Drayton's side and begged him to send help. The Captain's quick and trained eye took in the situation at a glance, and he ordered a midshipman to lower away a boat.

"They're coming for you! Hold on!" yelled Meredith over the rail.

Johnny smiled, and hung on with throbbing muscles. A few minutes later the boat reached him, and he was relieved of his burden. Then he fainted, and when he recovered consciousness he was lying on the deck of the Hartford, surrounded by his friends.

"He's all right," exclaimed Miss Mittykins.

"An' Little Cardee, says he, says he,
'A-rescued I'm a-goin' to be.'"

Mlle. de Calaveras, who was chafing one of the boy's hands, was smiling gently and singing the old song in a low tone.

"How are you boys?" said Johnny, feebly.
"Am I hit?"

"No," said Porgy, "you're not hit; you're drowned. Howsumever, I reckon you'll live to be hanged, as the widder used ter tell me."

"I remember now," said the boy. "And Morton—is he dead?"



HE BOUNDED THROUGH THE NEAREST PORT INTO THE WATER.

"No," said Meredith, "he's all right. He was knocked unconscious by a splinter, and he's got a big lump on his head; but he's safe."

"Where's the ram?" asked Johnny.

"She's down below us, having it hot and heavy with the other ships," said Meredith.

"We dassn't fire at her just now," exclaimed Porgy, "'cos tother wessels is atween us an' her. But we're a-comin' 'round so's to ram her."

"Oh, I must get up and see it," exclaimed Johnny.

They helped him to his feet. He felt a little weak and dizzy and his right arm was almost numb; but he was getting better every minute.

"Stand by your guns!" came the sharp order from the quarter-deck.

"Where's my powder-box?" cried Johnny.

He saw one lying on the deck, picked it up and slung it over his shoulder, and went a trifle unsteadily to his station.

"That 'ere boy are not made o' mush," said Porgy, earnestly; "he are built o' live-oak an' are copper-fastened inside an' out."

The Hartford was now swinging around to ram the Tennessee; but unfortunately the Lackawanna, coming from the opposite direc-

tion, was attempting to do the same thing. A collision was inevitable, and the Lackawanna struck the flagship a heavy blow, smashing the rail between two of her ports and overturning a gun. The crash, mingled with the ceaseless thunder of the heavy firing, was terrifying. The Admiral, who had descended from the rigging, jumped into the mizzen-chains to see what damage had been done, and it was thought that he had gone overboard. Fearful cries arose.

“Lower away the port boats!”

“Save the Admiral! save the Admiral!”

Farragut sprang upon the rail and showed himself to his men.

“Ahead, full speed!” he cried in ringing tones; “ram her, Drayton!”

Triumphant cheers rang along the deck and the Hartford once more dashed forward to the fray. Now the monitor Manhattan crawled up on the port side of the ram and drove a fifteen-inch shell against her stout casemate at short range. For the first time daylight showed through the cracks of that massive structure. Then the monitor Chickasaw ran under the ram's stern and hung there like grim fate, pounding away at the casemate with her eleven-inch guns, never more than fifty yards

away from the foe. The fighting was desperate. It was the last expiring struggle of a fearful contest. Admiral Buchanan was wounded; and Captain Johnston, taking command of the ram, fought on with unflagging courage. But the Tennessee's batteries became silent, except for an occasional shot, and with broken steering-gear she drifted aimlessly.

The devastating fire of the Union fleet had done its work, and at ten o'clock Captain Johnston went upon the casemate and waved a white flag. The battle was over and cheer upon cheer rolled across the water. Our friends all shook hands—all except Mlle. de Calaveras. With his lithe and sinuous body swaying with all the grace of his native element, he sprang upon the breech of the gun which Porgy had been firing, and with his eyes gleaming like coals in a face as white as driven foam in a gale, he cried:

“A song! a song of victory! What'll it be, my bullies? Mlle. de Calaveras will sing for you—oh!”

The light form reeled for a second, dark blue against the light-blue sky, and then toppled forward into Porgy's arms.

“Lord help us!” said the old seaman, hoarsely; “he's been hit!”

CHAPTER XVII

“DELICATE ARIEL, I’LL SET THEE FREE”

FOR a moment the little group of friends stood paralyzed, while Mlle. de Calaveras lay in Porgy’s great strong arms, smiling up into his rugged face, with gentle, loving eyes, and white, drawn lips.

“Lay me down on the deck, Porgy,” whispered the boy; “I’m used to decks, you know.”

The bronzed sailor laid the boy down with the tenderness of a woman. Then they all found their voices.

“Where’s the doctor?” cried Meredith.

“Down below with the wounded,” said Johnny.

“And there are so many,” exclaimed Miss Mittykins; “can’t we get him back to our own ship somehow?”

“Porgy, old man, go to the captain about it,” said Meredith; “he’ll listen to you.”

“What is it? What’s the trouble here?”

It was the voice of the officer commanding the division.

"Calaveras is wounded, sir," said Meredith; "Calaveras, the pet of our ship, the best——"

Meredith's voice shook, and he turned his head away. The officer looked sadly down at the boy, who had closed his eyes and was breathing quickly.

"A brave and true lad," he said; "he has done his duty like a man. Where is his wound?"

"Shot through the body," said Miss Mittykins; "his number is hoisted, sir. Can't we go back to our ship?"

"I'll see."

A few moments passed and then the steam-launch Loyall was called alongside and ordered to take the Mohawk's detail back to her. A tackle and sling were rigged to lower Calaveras into the boat, and as they prepared to lift him, he opened his eyes and gazed around him.

"What are they going to do to me, Porgy?" he asked.

"We're a-goin' all on us back to the Mohawk."

"I'm glad of that," said the boy, and then he asked, brightly: "Are you going to carry me into the boat? I don't think I can walk."

"We're a-goin' to lower you with a sling."

"Oh, how jolly! I've always wondered how that felt."

He was silent while Porgy carried him to the ship's side, though a quick sigh of pain escaped him as he was lifted.

"Did I hurt you, lad?" asked the old seaman, with great drops of perspiration starting on his brow.

"No, Porgy, it's nothing," answered the boy, smiling.

In the gangway stood a group of officers, for somehow a knowledge of that bright and sweet young spirit had spread through the flagship. As Porgy came up with his burden, Farragut stepped forward and took one of the boy's hands. Calaveras looked up into his face with amazement and reverence.

"My boy," said the great commander, "I am sorry you are hurt. You have done your duty bravely and well."

"God bless your honor," said the boy, softly, his eyes brightening with pride.

Then they lowered him gently into the launch, where Porgy had gone to receive him, and in a few minutes the dull churning of the engine was all that was heard as the little craft went swiftly down toward the mouth of the harbor. A sad group it was in the stern, where Porgy sat with Mlle. de Calaveras's head resting against his knee. Miss Mittykins was

kneeling on the floor-boards holding one of the wounded boy's hands. Meredith and Johnny sat on the other side of the boat, silent. They passed under the dumb guns of Fort Morgan, past which a few short hours before they had come up amid a hail of shot and shell. Outside the point, slowly rising and falling on the glassy swells, lay the small gunboats and the old Mohawk. The launch ran up to the port ladder, and a hundred eager faces peered over the rail to see who had come.

"Well done, lads!" cried Mr. Freeman, who was standing on the poop.

Porgy raised his hand for silence, and the officer said, anxiously :

"Who's that? Some one wounded?"

"It's Calaveras, sir," answered Porgy.

A wave of blank dismay swept over the faces of the whole crew. Orders were issued swiftly and in low tones, as if the familiar curtness of the quarter-deck might now be too sharp for those delicate ears. A tackle and sling were rigged, and the boy was gently hoisted aboard the ship which had been his only home for all the years of his young life. Strong arms bore him lovingly to the sick-bay, where the surgeon bent over him with all the tenderness of a father. Meanwhile Porgy, Meredith, and Miss

Mittykins were surrounded by the men forward, begging them in mournful tones to tell how Mlle. de Calaveras came to be wounded. The grizzled and hardy seamen seemed to take it as a direct personal affront to themselves, and appeared to be inclined to hold their shipmates in some way to blame for it.

"Blast ye all!" exclaimed Porgy, losing his patience, "d'ye s'pose there are one o' us wot wouldn't 'a' took the shot ef we'd knowed it were a-comin'? W'y I reckon even young Rodgers here, wot's a new hand, would 'a' done 't. Leastways he jumped in atween us an' the ram fur to save that there bloomin' marine from drownin'."

For a moment there was some curiosity about Johnny's exploit, but interest soon returned to Calaveras; and in half an hour the news had spread through the ship that he could not live. As soon as Captain Barker heard it, he went to the sick bay to see if he could do anything to ease the last moments of the ocean-waif.

"I think it might be best to send you ashore," he said, "as we are to go to sea to-night."

"Don't do that, sir," said Mlle. de Calaveras, with a smile; "I've got the land under my lee, sir, and I'm going ashore forever before long."

Keep me aboard, sir, and bury me out yonder where you found me."

The Captain turned away with tears in his eyes, for the pathos of this boy's life touched him deeply. In the second dog-watch, when the sun was filling the western horizon with a glory of orange flame, word was sent on deck that the dying boy wished to see his immediate companions. Porgy, Meredith, Mittykins, Johnny, and Scipio were admitted to the sick bay.

"Boys," said Calaveras, faintly, "they've hoisted the recall for me and I've got to go."

"W'ich you're bound fur the right port, lad," said Porgy, "'cos w'y: ye've allus sailed under the direction o' the right Pilot."

"Would one of you—mind saying—a prayer to help me—to round to?"

There was a moment's hesitation and then Johnny Rodgers dropped on his knees beside the cot and the orphan outcast repeated the Lord's Prayer for the orphan castaway. After that there was silence, broken only by the fast breathing of the dying boy and the creak of cordage as the ship slowly rolled on the light swell. Presently Calaveras's mind began to wander, and he muttered:

"Come—come! Porgy, it's our—watch—in the foretop. Nothing in sight—that's good.

No! there's a sail! Sing out, Porgy—I can't—I'm so tired."

He relapsed into silence and closed his eyes. His breath came in a long sigh, and they all thought that it was over. But the young chest began to heave again, and suddenly clutching the sides of the cot in a convulsive grip, Calaveras sat bolt upright with bright wide-open eyes, and the clear, sweet voice that had so often filled the forecastle deck with its songs, rang out, in one strong cry:

"Land ho!"

Then the muscles relaxed, the breath went out in a short gasp, and Mlle. de Calaveras fell back in the cot, asleep till the last great reveillé.

"Mlle. de Calaveras is dead!"

The sad news flew from lip to lip, and it needed not the sight of the three sobbing boys who came out of the sick-bay with Porgy and Scipio to fill the decks with grief. The crew went about its labors in the most absolute silence. Even the officers gave their orders in low tones, as if fearful of disturbing the child of nature who slept so peacefully below. In the first watch the Mohawk got her anchor and with a mild westerly wind sighing across her deck, stole out into the Gulf as if on tiptoe.

The wind freshened in the night and by six o'clock the next evening the ship was a good two hundred miles at sea. It was then that the bell tolled and that four of the crew bore the slender body on deck and placed it by the rail with an ensign spread over it. Captain Barker and the officers stood with heads uncovered, as the crew did, while the Captain read the service for the burial of the dead. After the waters had parted and closed again till the end of time over the young form, the Captain raised his hand for attention and said:

"My lads, I know that your sorrow is great; but let us all remember that, young as he was, he gave his life for his country and so died a glorious hero. Let us all look to it that we are as fit to go into the presence of the Great Admiral as he was."

"Amen," murmured the doctor.

As the crew dispersed Morton Brewer walked up to Johnny, whose eyes were still wet with tears, and said:

"If it hadn't been for you, I might have been where that little fellow is. I sha'n't forget that. Will you shake hands?"

And Johnny, looking into Morton's face as he held his hand, realized that the old hostility was buried forever.

CHAPTER XVIII

A SAIL AND A NIGHT-CHASE

THREE days later the Mohawk was well to the northward and eastward of the Florida channel. A brisk northwest wind was blowing and the ship was under all plain sail to her topgallants, close hauled on the starboard tack, with her port guns pointing into the streamers of smoking foam that spread sternward from her lee bow, and her starboard guns pointing at the white-edged, leaden-centred clouds that flew across the field of blue. In the changing rifts the soaring sun flashed in and out, now turning the ocean to a shimmering sea of sapphire and silver, and again leaving it a gray plain serried with ridges of snow. The rounded sails stood out hard and sharp with their crescent edges against the sky, their brown hollows filled with warm shadows and the ceaseless roar of the driving breeze. Leaning against the lee rail just forward of the mainmast stood Johnny and Morton Brewer.

"I think you ought to write to your father as soon as we make port, Morton," said Johnny.

"I suppose you're right," said Morton. "Perhaps I didn't do just as I ought to in coming away."

"I'm glad you think that way, Morton. You know he's your father, after all. I only wish mine were alive; I don't think anything could drive me away from him."

"And mine hasn't been much of a father to you, has he?"

"Well, never mind about that," said Johnny. "If he'll only take good care of my money, so that I can get a fair start in life after I've served my time out here."

Morton turned his head away in order that Johnny might not see his face, for he looked unhappy.

"I hope to get a chance to buy a share in a merchant vessel," continued Johnny, "and set up in commerce."

"Hang it all!" exclaimed Morton, "I must tell you the honest truth. I don't believe you'll get the money so easily, for father doesn't want to part with it; and, besides, I think he intends to leave Sancet."

"To leave Sancet!" exclaimed Johnny;

“Why, where’s he going? And what’s he going for?”

The boy’s question was destined to go without an answer, for just as Morton appeared to to be about to reply, the voice of the lookout rang out :

“Sail ho !”

The usual questions and answers followed, and it was learned that a vessel had been descried far to the westward, toward the land standing out on the port tack, in such a direction that she must in time cross the Mohawk’s bows. His ship was near a hostile coast and it was impossible for Captain Barker to be too cautious. He was sent for, and the moment he became acquainted with the exact state of affairs he determined to tack ship, and the next instant the order was shouted :

“Ready about !”

The eager crew sprang smartly to stations and the commands swiftly followed :

“Helm’s a-lee ! Rise tacks and sheets ! Haul taut ! Mainsail haul ! Let go and haul !”

For several minutes, as the Mohawk swung round from the starboard to the port tack, there was a bewildering confusion of noises. Blocks groaned, loose canvas slatted and thundered, and the deck resounded with the tread

of many feet. Then the ship gathered way on the new tack and order resumed its sway.

The stranger was now far astern of the *Mohawk*, but holding a weatherly course. A midshipman was sent to the mizzen topmast head with a strong glass.

"She's an old-fashioned ship, like the *Mohawk*, sir," he sang out in answer to the Captain's questions, "with tall topsails and topgallants."

"That must be the *Osceola*, if it's a warship at all," said Mr. Wilson; "she's the only old ship of the line they have in commission."

"If it is the *Osceola*, she has light heels," said Mr. Freeman; "I served in her once."

"We'll soon find out," said Captain Barker, letting his voice swell out into a sharp cry: "Aloft and loose the royals!"

No sooner were the new sails set than the midshipman aloft cried:

"There go his royals, sir!"

"Mr. Freeman," said the Captain, "it looks like a chase."

"Ay, sir, it does that; but it's a stern chase."

"And if you were to let the *Mohawk* off a point, sir," said the Master, Mr. Wilson, "I think the old girl would fairly take the bit in her teeth and run away from yonder fellow."

"We'll try it, sir," said the Captain, giving the necessary command to the man at the wheel. The stranger was now plainly visible from the deck, though his movements could still be advantageously watched from aloft. Half an hour passed and the midshipman called:

"I think he's gaining on us, sir."

"There's no question of that," muttered Captain Barker; "I can see the heads of his courses now."

"Confound the fellow!" exclaimed Mr. Drake, the second-watch officer.

"What's wrong, Drake?" said Mr. Truxton, with a laugh. "Don't you care about glory, and a little prize money thrown in?"

"Tut, tut, gentlemen," said the Captain; "your talk is idle. My orders are to proceed northward with all haste and avoid fighting, if possible."

"And here we are going to the eastward," said the First Lieutenant, "as if Davy Jones himself were after us."

"As soon as it is fairly dark, sir, we shall tack again," said the Captain.

"And lose our anxious friend in the night," said Mr. Truxton.

Porgy and Johnny got the foretop lookout

in the first watch, and at nine-thirty o'clock the Mohawk went about. The last glimmer of daylight had shown the stranger some seven or eight miles astern. The wind was lighter, but the sky was almost a solid mass of gray cloud. It was a densely dark night with the glimmer of a single star here and there.

"I reckon now," said Porgy, "that 'ere consummacious wessel are lost us."

"I suppose so," said Johnny, "but I wish the old man had fought instead of running."

"This 'ere old hooker are not much fur fightin' now," said Porgy. "Her days is pooty near done, an' I shouldn' be at all astonidged ef they guv our skipper somethin' with a perpeller astarn w'en he gits back to Noo Yawk."

The two friends watched loyally for an hour and then Johnny suddenly exclaimed:

"Porgy, look quick! Where the one star is—there!"

"Wot are it, my son?"

"Something dark and quick slipped across that star. It looked like the royal of a ship."

"Mebbe you seed it an' mebbe you didn't. But ef you did, it were the other ship a-crossin' our wake, an' thinkin' she are a-follerin' us out to sea."

"Then we'll get away from her."

But in the last hours of the mid-watch, as darkness glimmered into dawn, Scipio and Meredith, who relieved Porgy and Johnny, reported a sail broad off the weather quarter, and daylight, which came in with a southeasterly wind and a drizzle of rain in the air, showed the towering spars and frowning ports of the grim pursuer not more than two miles away. Captain Barker was on deck in a minute and more sail was added to the already groaning spars of the Mohawk. The good ship reeled and staggered across the undulating expanse of leaden green, but the enemy gained perceptibly every moment.

"I am much afraid that I shall have to disobey my orders," said Captain Barker, with a grim smile.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Freeman, "I don't suppose the Admiral expects you to perform impossibilities."

"No, sir," answered the Captain, taking a calm and steady survey of the foe. "She'll be within range in less than an hour at this rate."

"Surely, sir."

"I am a patient man, Mr. Freeman, but I'm not going to wait any longer."

And before the First Lieutenant quite realized the Captain's intention, he shouted :

“ Aloft to furl royals! In royals, down flying jib! Furl the royals! Stow flying jib! Man fore and main clew garnets and buntlines! Up fore and main sail!”

These orders were executed with the speed of an old-time crew, and the ship sailed denuded of her highest and lowest canvas.

“ And now, Mr. Freeman,” said the Captain, quietly, “ we’ll clear ship for action, for yonder fellow will be down quickly.”

The watch below was already pouring on deck, for well the men knew what the shortening of sail meant; but their willing feet bounded more lightly up the ladders when the sharp beat of the drum rang out, followed by the screeching of the pipes and the bawling of the boatswain’s mates:

“ A-a-a-all hands, clear ship for action!”

“ Werry good, too,” said Porgy. “ As the widder used ter say, ye can’t do no work with yer coat on.”

In ten minutes the Mohawk was in fighting trim, with her crew at the shotted guns.

“ Steady,” said the Captain to the man at the wheel.

“ Steady, sir,” repeated the man.

“ There goes an ensign up,” said Mr. Freeman.

A small, dark ball was hoisted to the spanker peak, where it broke out into the streaming red and white of the British man-of-war flag. Laughter sounded along the deck of the Mohawk, and the division officers had not the heart to suppress it.

CHAPTER XIX

AN OLD-FASHIONED NAVAL DUEL

"KEEP all guns trained on that ship, but do not fire till you get the order," said Mr. Freeman. "Quartermaster!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Show him the Chinese flag."

The triangular yellow ensign was run up on the peak halyards. Its appearance was a sufficient answer to the pursuing vessel. It meant that the Mohawk was just as much of a Chinese as the Osceola was of an Englishman. The stranger at once hauled down the English flag and hoisted the stars and bars of the Confederacy.

"Now show him our colors," said Captain Barker.

Down came the flag of the Chinese Empire and up went the Stars and Stripes, while three hearty cheers broke from the Mohawk's crew.

Boom!

A cloud of white smoke spurted from the port bow of the Osceola, and a cannon-ball

plumped into the water under the Mohawk's stern, sending a column of silvery spray into the air. No answer was made by the Mohawk. Her men stood like carved statues at the guns, waiting the command of the First Lieutenant. The members of the Master's division were now sent quietly to their stations at the sheets, tacks, and braces, and every preparation was made for hauling sharp on the wind. The Osceola, in the meantime, was shortening sail with the evident intention of engaging the Mohawk in an old-fashioned yard-arm to yard-arm fight.

"Wot'n blazes are the skipper a-tryin' to do?" muttered Porgy.

"I guess he knows," whispered Johnny in reply.

The Osceola came ranging up on the weather quarter of the Mohawk, firing steadily as she came. Most of her shots flew high, but one struck the quarter and played havoc with the Captain's cabin.

"I'll pay you well for that, my friend," muttered Captain Barker, nodding to Mr. Wilson, who in turn waved his hand to the chief boat-swain's mate. That petty officer blew a short, sharp blast on his pipe. Instantly the helm was put down and the yards braced up. The Mo-

hawk came up with the wind on the starboard beam, throwing her directly across the Osceola's bows at a distance of some two hundred yards.

"Fire!" cried Mr. Freeman.

The Mohawk staggered, and her whole frame trembled as the entire starboard broadside burst into one fearful blast of death. The swirling smoke shut the Osceola out of sight for a minute; but the terrible shrieks and the rending of wood told that the broadside had well done its devastating work.

"Up with your helm! Round in the weather braces!" ordered Mr. Wilson.

"Man the port battery!" said Mr. Freeman.

The Mohawk had now crossed the Osceola's bow, and as the result of the Master's orders was bringing her port guns to bear. It was the Captain's intention to get his vessel broadside to broadside with the enemy, whose maimed condition now became apparent. Her mizzen topmast had been shot away, and the main topsail yard had lost its lifts. Her hull was pierced in a dozen places, and her sails and rigging were riddled and cut. Nevertheless she was gallantly handled. Her guns kept at their deadly work and the groans of the

wounded began to sound along the Mohawk's decks. The Osceola, seeing that the Mohawk was endeavoring to get on her starboard beam, kept away with the intention of raking her. But Captain Barker was too old a hand to be caught napping. He directed the Master to bring the wind on the port beam. This brought the two vessels side to side once more, and immediately Mr. Freeman again commanded:

“Fire!”

The Mohawk delivered her entire port broadside at a range of less than seventy-five yards. The effect was appalling. Screams of agony filled the air, and for a few moments the crew of the Osceola seemed to be paralyzed. Captain Barker seized the opportunity for a decisive moment.

“Up with the helm!” he cried.

“Boarders in the port bow!” commanded Mr. Freeman, springing forward to lead them.

The two ships closed, the Mohawk's bowsprit thrusting itself over the cat-head of the Osceola, while the marines, among whom Morton Brewer was doing his duty manfully, poured a sweeping fire of musketry down upon her. With ringing cheers Mr. Freeman and the boarding party streamed over the Osceola's

bulwarks and began a hand-to-hand fight on her blood-stained deck. The Confederate crew fought bravely; but their numbers had been much reduced, their ship was riddled, and they felt that the fortune of the day was against them. Slowly and steadily they were beaten back to the quarter deck. Most of their officers were killed or wounded, and, at last, when Mr. Freeman, with a shout of exultation, burst through their ranks and, springing upon the poop, hauled down their vessel's flag, they sullenly surrendered amid the cheers of the Mohawk's crew. Captain Bland, of the Osceola, at once went aboard the Mohawk and offered his sword to Captain Barker. They had been classmates at the Naval Academy and now they were enemies. But Captain Barker said simply:

"Put your sword back in the scabbard, Bland, and come and have some dinner."

Mr. Freeman at once set to work transferring the prisoners from the Osceola and putting a prize crew aboard of her to take her into port. It so happened that none of our friends was wounded in the engagement and that all of them were ordered to serve as members of the prize crew. Even Morton Brewer was in the small detail of marines that was sent aboard

the captured ship. Lieutenant Drake was ordered to command the prize.

"You are to sail in company with us," said Mr. Freeman, repeating the Captain's orders, "but if anything occurs to part us, you will make the best of your way to Fort Monroe with your vessel."

The prize crew was set to work at getting the rigging of the Osceola in order for sailing, and it was nearly sunset when that was accomplished.

"Porgy," said Johnny, as he was at work on a splice, "I begin to feel like a veteran."

"'Cos w'y? Ye bin in two fights. Two!"

"Yes, but one was a pretty big one," said Johnny.

"Werry good, an' t'other were a old-fashioned sea-fight sich as are goin' out o' style sense steam an' ironclads an' monitors an' sich things come in."

"Mittykins," said Johnny, "I thought you were done for when I saw you go down in the boarding party."

"I should have been," said Miss Mittykins, "if it hadn't been for Scipio. He split the head of the gentleman who was pointing a pistol at mine. Scipio has a very pretty way with a cutlass."

"W'ich the same you kin appreciate better," said Porgy, "w'en you are in werry much need of 't."

"Done gone smash him head all right," said Scipio. "Dey killed ouah Calaveras; wot we uns gwine do ef dey kills ouah Mit'kins too, humph?"

The friends worked in silence after this speech, for they were not yet able to talk calmly about the death of Mlle. de Calaveras. Half an hour before sundown Mr. Drake reported the Osceola ready to get under way, and at once the order came by signal from the Mohawk to follow in column.

"But I don't like the looks of the weather," muttered Mr. Drake. "It has been blowing sullenly from the southwest all day, and now it is piping up fresh from the southeast. I wish I had a sounder ship under me."

Sunset, dark red and lowering, deepened into a gray and gloomy twilight, and the twilight passed into a hard and starless night. The stern light of the Mohawk glowed like a red coal in the gloom, and the outlines of her sails stood in inky blackness against the dark sky. The wind kept on increasing in force and by midnight was blowing half a gale.

"We must shorten sail," said Mr. Drake, calling his signalman.

The Mohawk was informed that even two topsails were too much for the Osceola and permission was given her to reef. The Mohawk herself was sailing comfortably, but in order to avoid running away from her prize she also shortened sail.

"Werry good, too," commented Porgy, "but afore mornin' we'll have to heave to, I reckon, or else I don't know nothin' about the weather."

Mr. Drake remained on deck constantly. It was no night for him to turn in. At two o'clock he signalled the Mohawk that he deemed it advisable to heave his ship to on the starboard tack. Captain Barker responded that he would do the same. The lookouts on the Osceola were ordered to keep their eyes doubly wide-open and never to lose sight of the Mohawk's lights. All night long the men in the foretop strained their eyes in the fathomless gloom, but when a little before daylight a driving rain swept down, their labor was useless. When the cold, gray dawn came, it revealed the Osceola alone, staggering against the thundering seas under a close-reefed maintopsail, a bit of spanker, and a storm-jib.

CHAPTER XX

AT SEA IN A WHALE-BOAT

"I DON'T like the way this 'ere old hooker takes the sea," said Porgy.

"No, nor I," said Meredith.

"What's the matter with her?" asked Johnny.

"She wallers," answered Porgy, sententially; and with that answer Johnny was for the time forced to be content.

Lieutenant Drake was plainly none too well pleased with the behavior of the *Osceola*, and he stood under the shelter of the weather-rail, anxiously gazing at the sky up to windward, as if he hoped to detect some evidence of a break in the gale.

"It will hardly last more than twenty-four hours," he muttered; "but shall we last that long?"

A very heavy sea was running, and the wind was blowing with the force of a strong gale. The great waves reared themselves in beetling walls of writhing gray and white, and came

storming down with avalanche speed upon the ship. The howling wind caught the foaming crests and, tearing them off like shreds of paper, sent them driving down to leeward in sheets of spindrift that rained across the sea in streamers of snow and pelted the *Osceola* like the outpour of a thunderstorm. Up in the tense cordage aloft, the wind yelled and shrieked in a thousand agonized voices, while below the hollows of the ship were filled with wild groanings, as if at every plunge she would give up the unequal contest and let her strained timbers fall apart. But the story of her struggle was best told by the reluctant rise of her bows to the under-running billows and her heavy, hopeless, crashing plunges into the black abysses. To Johnny Rodgers, who had never before been at sea in a great blow, it seemed as if the whole world had gone staggering crazy, so shaken were his senses by the frightful wreathing and rolling and quaking of all that he could see.

At ten o'clock the carpenter's mate came on deck and reported one foot of water in the hold. Mr. Drake at once gave orders to man the pumps, and the wearisome clank soon began its rhythmical beat of the ship's doom.

"It's no use, sir," said the carpenter's mate

an hour later, "the water's a-gainin' all the time."

"The guns must go overboard," said Mr. Drake.

Forthwith tackles were rigged and the difficult and dangerous task of hoisting out the battery was begun. The sullen plunge of the first nine-inch gun into the boiling sea threw a pall of gloom over the spirits of the whole ship's crew. They felt that the end was close at hand; yet they never faltered, but stoically went on with their disheartening task. At five o'clock in the afternoon there was a sudden shift of the wind.

"Now, lads," cried Mr. Drake, "work with a will. The gale has blown itself out. We'll have a decent sea by morning and we'll carry her into port yet."

The crew responded with a cheer, but they knew he spoke against his own belief.

"She are a-settlin' under us," said Porgy in the mid-watch.

"Why don't Mr. Drake take to the boats?" asked Johnny.

"Most on 'em's smashed," said Porgy; "but that's wot it'll come to."

At dawn the *Osceola* was rolling with the leaden motion of a water-logged hulk, and Mr.

Drake knew that she could not last much longer. The gale had died to a mere breath before midnight, and now the sea was as smooth as oil, though it still ran out of the southeast in the brimming, polished folds of a large swell. It was as if the ocean lay panting after its battle with the wind.

“Away all boats!” cried Mr. Drake, dashing his hand across his eyes.

It was, indeed, fortunate that the prize crew numbered only forty men, for the *Osceola* had only three boats left in a seaworthy condition, and one of these was a small whale-boat. Porgy, being sure of some consideration by reason of his long service, had asked Mr. Drake to allot all our friends places in this boat, and as there was no reason why the request should not be granted, Mr. Drake gave his assent. Consequently, Porgy, Scipio, Meredith, Miss Mittykins, Johnny, Morton Brewer, and two others constituted the whale-boat's crew, the other thirty-two being divided between the two cutters. All hands were now set to work preparing the boats for abandoning the ship, and in the orderly manner of doing this work the solid discipline of a man-of-war's crew showed itself to advantage. Every man had a station and special duties to per-

form. Rations for ten days were taken, consisting of three-quarters of a pound of meat, seven-eighths of a pound of bread, and two quarts of water per day for each man. In each boat were placed two rifles with ammunition, together with signal flags, lanterns, answering pennants and other apparatus for communicating. A compass, a box of mess-gear, the sails, spars, and oars, went toward filling up the boat. Although there was so much to be done, it was all accomplished with swiftness and certainty, for men-of-war's men are drilled in just such exercises as abandoning ship. In half an hour the boats were ready to lower. It seemed as if every sodden plunge of the shattered vessel would be her last, yet she kept afloat, as if loath to sink, or rest in the element with which she had so long victoriously contested. A sharp order from Mr. Drake set the blocks of the boat-falls rattling, and in a few minutes the three light craft were in the water and moving slowly away from the side of the ship.

"The boats," said Mr. Drake, "will move in line, mine on the right, Mr. Berry's on the left, and Lynn's in the centre. All movements will be made by orders from my boat. We are now about one hundred and fifty miles to the eastward of Cape Fear, and unless we are

picked up by some vessel, we would better steer for that point, where we ought to fall in with some of our blockaders. The compass course is west three-quarters north, and in case of separation each boat will make the best of its way to the mouth of the Cape Fear River."

"Werry good, too," muttered Porgy; "an' ef we don't fall in with no blockader we kin git ashore an' be tuk prisoners o' war, an' a werry sweet time we'll have then, as the widder use ter say w'en she had to take squills fur a cold."

"I don't see why we don't try to sail to Fort Monroe," said Johnny.

"Don't you?" said Meredith, with a smile.

"An' I don't see w'y we don't just go a-cavortin' aroun' the open sea a-takin' prizes with this 'ere forty-four gun frigate wot we're a-cruisin' in," said Porgy.

Johnny was abashed by this speech and held his peace, but Miss Mittykins said, mildly:

"It's not such a wild scheme, Porgy. It is a big one, I know, but the survivors of the *Metamora* sailed six hundred miles in an open boat."

"I didn' say't couldn't be did," said Porgy; "but it'd be takin' big chances to try it."

"And we have other orders," remarked Mor-

ton Brewer, who, being a marine, did not venture to speak often.

"Them orders is good so long's the boats is together," responded Porgy.

"But surely, Porgy," said Johnny, "you wouldn't think of separating from the other boats on purpose!"

"Not much," replied the old seaman; "bein' alone at sea in a open boat ain't no Fourth o' July sailin' party, my son."

"The Osceola still floats," said Miss Mittykins; "look at her."

Up to this time the three boats, having been pulled far enough away to avoid the danger of suction when the ship went down, had been drifting idly, their occupants waiting to see the last of their recent prize. The Osceola was now wallowing pathetically in the trough of the sea. She was down by the head, and as she slowly rose after each weary plunge, the water poured in great spouts out of her empty bridle-ports.

"Ay, it's a sad sight to see a ship in that 'ere state," said Porgy, in a low voice; "but s'posin' the gale had 'a' kep' on blowin'."

"We have every reason to be thankful," said Meredith.

"Yes," said Porgy, solemnly; "four hours

more o' that wind would 'a' sent us all to Davy Jones's locker."

The last word had hardly passed the seaman's lips when a great cry arose from all the boats:

"Look! Look!"

All eyes turned to the ship. Rearing her shattered bow upon the luminous slope of a wide, gray billow, with the water running from every wound in her side as if it were her life-blood, she staggered heavily forward, like a man falling upon his face, into the gloomy vault of the next hollow. The second wave rolled clear over her forecastle deck, whitening in a living shroud of foam to the foot of her mainmast. Her stern rose into the air till the whole rudder cut its outline in sharp silhouette against the sky; and then the black length of her rushed swiftly downward and vanished in a wide upward leap of triumphant spray.

There was a deep and oppressive silence in the boats, until Mr. Drake shouted in cheery tones:

"Now, lads, all hands step masts and make sail."

A few short sighs were breathed, for it makes a sailor thoughtful to see a ship sink; and the men went to work with a will. In a quarter of an hour the boats were under sail and running free on their course with a very

light breeze. In the afternoon, however, the wind died out entirely, and as Mr. Drake did not deem it wise to work the men at the oars, the boats tossed idly on the dull gray sea. Night found them still drifting, though they were sufficiently close together. At ten o'clock a damp, raw breeze came in from the southward and eastward, and the little fleet began once more to move toward the distant coast. The whale-boat, which carried a very small rig, began to drop astern, but the lights in the other boats were dimly visible until some time after midnight. Then Meredith, who was at the helm, shook Porgy, who was taking a brief sleep.

"Wot's up, mate?" asked Porgy, sitting up and looking around; "hello! w're's 'tother boats?"

"That's just it," said Meredith; "I suddenly lost sight of their lights."

Porgy put his hand to his beard and then said:

"W'y, my lad, can't you feel nothin'? We're in a drivin' fog."

"Let's blow the fog-horn right away," said Miss Mittykins, reaching for it.

"Fog swallers sound sometimes," said Porgy; "but blow away." Miss Mittykins put the horn to his lips and sounded a long, hoarse blast. There was no answer.

CHAPTER XXI

HIRAM BREWER LEAVES SANCET

IN the meantime there were developments in the little town of Sancet. The story of Hiram Brewer's treatment of Johnny Rodgers was not long in making itself known to every one in the place, and it did not tend to increase the man's popularity. More than that his pronounced sympathy with the Confederate cause was enough to make him a marked person in a town which was sending its best blood to wet the field of battle in defense of the Union. Hiram Brewer walked the streets of Sancet with his head down. His only companion was Euphrastus Durand, the eminently respectable principal of the Tuzo School, who spent much of his time in whispered consultations with his old patron. They were often seen together, and their apparent desire for privacy made the townspeople all the more suspicious of them.

"I ain't edzackly satersfied about them fellers," said old Silas Pratt, the town constable.

"Neither 'm I, Si," replied Phineas Plum, the postmaster.

"Fack is," said Silas, "I'm afeard they got some sort o' scheme on."

"Wuss'n that, Si; wuss'n that," said Phineas, mysteriously.

"Dunno jess wot could be wuss," said Silas.

"They git queer letters."

"How d'ye know?"

"Wal, letters come wot's been folded up small an' been wet an' been a long time on the road; an' them letters come from sommers a good way south."

Such talk as this was not favorable to Hiram Brewer, and it finally reached such a pitch that a committee of townspeople was appointed to call on him.

"Wot we are here fur," said Silas, who was the spokesman of the committee, "is to ask you to say plain an' straight wot your politics is. Are you fur the Union or ag'in it?"

"I don't know what right you people have," replied Hiram Brewer, "to walk into my house and question me."

"The right wot any community's got to perfect itself ag'in traitors," said Phineas.

"And who dares to call me a traitor?"

"Easy, easy, gentlemen," interposed Mr.

Durand, who was present. "Will you permit me to suggest, my dear sir, that you give these gentlemen an answer and so pacify them? It is so much more edifying to see peace among brethren in such times of tribulation——"

"We don't care nothin' about being pacified," said Silas, sturdily. "All we got to say is that there ain't room in Sancet for no copperheads, an' we s'pect that you two men are rebel sympathizers."

"That'll do!" exclaimed Mr. Brewer. "This is my house and I'm no traitor. Now get out."

"Sartainly, sartainly," said Silas, who was supposed to know the law. "Ye got a right to order us out, Mr. Brewer, but we're glad to hear ye say ye ain't no traitor."

The committee took its departure, but once out in the street, Phineas shook his head and declared that he had no faith in Mr. Brewer's fine words. And the other members of the committee agreed with him. So they determined to keep a watch on the movements of the two men. It was about ten days later when a strange brigantine dropped anchor in Sancet Harbor and her Captain, having come ashore in his dingey, inquired the way to the home of Hiram Brewer.

"I'd give a dollar to know wot he's up to now," said Silas.

"Got to watch him, that's all," said Phineas.

And they watched as well as they could, but without learning anything definite. The brigantine lay at anchor half a mile off shore and no curiosity-seeker was allowed to board her. At night she was as dark as a cave until all Sancet was abed. One loiterer on a dark night noticed that at eleven o'clock—a late hour for the little town—a single blue light was hoisted to her spanker peak, where it glowed significantly in the gloom. The next night Silas and Phineas stayed on watch till midnight. At eleven o'clock the blue light was hoisted, but, although they waited an hour longer, they saw nothing at all suspicious.

"By gum!" said Silas, "them fellers ain't got that light up there fur nothin'."

"Nope!" exclaimed Phineas. "An' look there!"

A quick glance showed them the dark forms of Hiram Brewer and Euphrastus Durand hastening toward the former's house. The secret which the watchers could not detect was one of importance. Mr. Brewer felt that Sancet was no longer a safe place for him, and he had determined to go South and become a financial

supporter of the Confederacy. Mrs. Durand had died and the Tuzo School had become unprofitable, so Mr. Durand had decided to go with his patron. The only thing that weighed upon Mr. Brewer's mind was the absence of his son, for the old man had one tender spot in his heart, and that was for his boy. But he had no idea where to search for him. The brigantine was a vessel which Mr. Brewer had hired. He had instructed her Captain, Burton Sparks, to get as small a crew as was practicable and to provision the vessel in the cheapest possible manner. Perhaps the Captain in his desire to make a big profit exceeded his instructions. At any rate there was a crew of only eight men and the provisions laid in were quite indescribable. But the most important feature of the scheme was not laid before the Captain till he was at anchor in Sancet Harbor.

"I'm not going to land in the Confederacy," said Mr. Brewer, "without a valuable offering to prove my sincerity. I've got a nice cargo of arms and ammunition for you, Captain, and we've got to exercise some ingenuity in getting it aboard."

"I see," said Captain Sparks. "Where are the goods?"

"They're in boxes concealed in an old barn on the point."

"Then I reckon we'd better get them off a little at a time, by boat, late at night."

"Can you command your crew to do this?"

"If I promise them a little extra pay, they'll work all night."

"I think, my dear friend," said Mr. Durand, "that it would be discreet for us to accept the excellent suggestion of this experienced mariner"

Mr. Brewer did not like the idea of paying the crew extra, but he was compelled to agree to do so, for the Captain could see no other way to get the boxes safely aboard. On the night on which Silas and Phineas saw Mr. Brewer and Mr. Durand the last of the boxes had been safely stowed in the hold of the vessel and the blue light had been finally lowered. Mr. Brewer and Mr. Durand now went to the house of the former to get a night's rest and to secure the clothing and other personal property which they wished to take with them. The brigantine was to sail at midnight the following night, if the wind favored.

"Phineas," said Silas, as they walked homeward, "to-morrow night, instead o' lyin' around here, let's git a boat an' have a close look at that brigantine."

"That's a good idee, Si; I'll have my row-boat here."

At 10.30 the following night the two watchers, with muffled oars, pulled off toward the brigantine. She was as dark and as silent as a tomb.

"I guess we're too early," said Phineas.

So they rowed back and lay alongside a pier, waiting to see the blue light go up. Of course they were disappointed. But at 11.30 they heard the sounds of rattling blocks and creaking cordage.

"By gum!" exclaimed Phineas, "she's gettin' under way."

"Pull hard!" ejaculated Silas.

The two men rowed out to the brigantine and found that their suspicions were correct. Sail was being made on the vessel. At the same moment they discovered that a boat was alongside of her and that men were boarding her. As they approached, they were met with a stern hail:

"Boat ahoy! Keep off there, or you'll get hurt."

"We ain't doin' you no harm!" said Phineas, still rowing.

"I know that voice," exclaimed Mr. Brewer, who was now on the brigantine's deck. "You

men go back to town and go to bed. If you undertake to come alongside of my vessel, I'll blow you out of the water."

"My dear sir," said Mr. Durand, "pray be calm."

"I'm through being calm! I've been watched and dogged till I'll stand it no longer."

"Mr. Brewer," called Phineas, "we suspect that you're goin' South with arms."

"It's none of your business where I'm going."

Phineas and Silas pulled two or three strokes nearer. At that moment the brigantine's head had fallen off so that her headsails began to draw and she moved forward. The two men in the rowboat, hardly knowing what they were trying to do, dashed forward toward the lee side of the vessel. The next instant the sharp report of a pistol rang out.

"Keep off!" shouted Mr. Brewer; "there's more where that came from."

"We'll send a Union gunboat after you!" cried Silas.

"Send her when you like!" was the reply; "we'll be on the sea and she'll have to find us before she can take us."

And the brigantine, with all her canvas drawing, swam swiftly out of sight in the darkness.

CHAPTER XXII

AN UNEXPECTED OBSTACLE

THE wind was over the port quarter and the brigantine went smoothly along at an eight-knot gait. Mr. Brewer and Mr. Durand, having seen the last of Phineas and Silas, went to the Captain's cabin, where they sat down to indulge in a cooling draught of ale after the warm experiences of the evening. The beverage soon made them drowsy and they went to their state-rooms. When they awoke the sun was streaming in at the ports and the long steady roll of the vessel told them they were well out at sea. The steward had an inviting breakfast on the cabin table and Mr. Brewer was prepared to do justice to it. As for Mr. Durand, when he saw the steaming food, he turned pale and decided that his appetite needed to be encouraged by a walk on deck. After breakfast Mr. Brewer found him there leaning over the taffrail and looking extremely unhappy.

"My dear sir," he said, "the instability of these undulating waters troubles me greatly."

"Durand, you're sea-sick. You'll get over it in a day or two," was Mr. Brewer's sympathetic response.

"Do you really think so? I feared that I was about to die," groaned the poor schoolmaster, who had never been at sea before.

Of course Mr. Durand did not die, but on the contrary lived in a state of perpetual torment, for he could not become fully accustomed to the unexpected movements of the vessel. It was a slow voyage, too, for headwinds and calms delayed the brigantine's progress. Mr. Brewer walked the deck in angry impatience.

"Why didn't I have sense enough to hire a steamer?" he said.

"But, my dear sir," expostulated Mr. Durand, "think how expensive that would have been."

"No more so than having these precious sailors eating their heads off at sea when we ought to be in port. I half believe Captain Sparks knew that we were going to be delayed."

"That really seems to me to be quite impossible."

"If he didn't know it, why did he make me lay in provisions for two months."

"Merely, my esteemed friend, as a measure of necessary precaution. You know we are at the mercy of wind and wave—or rather, I should say, in the keeping of Divine Providence——"

"Stuff and nonsense!" exclaimed Mr. Brewer. "Anyhow, the food that they're eating will not make them fat."

"How's that, my dear sir? Is it not of a nourishing nature?"

"It'll keep them alive and working, and that's all I care for; but they will not find their meals a feast."

"Really, I am much concerned at hearing this, my dear sir."

"Why? What difference does it make to you? You don't have to eat the stuff, do you?"

"No, no; pray be calm, sir. I have read that sometimes sailors who are ill-fed behave very badly."

"Rubbish, all rubbish! You've been reading some silly sea-yarn. Why, those fellows don't know what good food means."

At that moment there was a sudden bustle forward and an outbreak of loud words. Cap-

tain Sparks was there and the two men on the after-deck saw him raise a heavy belaying-pin and knock down a seaman named Jared Lure.

"Lie there, you cub!" cried the Captain. "Lie there till you're ready to attend to your work and stop skulking. Now, then, my lads, aloft and loose the royal."

The men whose duty it was to obey that order moved so slowly that the Captain indulged in helpless profanity, and Mr. Durand turned pale with anxiety. The fact was that the Captain had for two or three days past noted signs of discontent among the men and was trying to restore submission in his own peculiar way. If he could have peeped into the forecastle that evening when his crew was at supper he might have learned a good deal.

"Look here!" exclaimed Jared Lure, who bore a heavy bruise across his forehead, "I'd like to know what sort o' stuff they call this."

"That there's tea, Jared," replied another seaman, with a hoarse laugh, "don't you see the leaves? They're big enough."

"They look like tobacco-leaves to me," said another.

"An' I'll swear they taste like 'em," said a third.

"No they don't, or I wouldn't mind 'em,"

said Jared. "They taste like sawdust, they do. An' look at them biscuit! What's in 'em?"

"Never mind the name o't, Jared."

"Well, how long are you fellows goin' to stand it? Poor grub an' shorthanded makes a mighty tough combine fur sailors, I say, an' I've got enough."

"So've I," said a second seaman, "an' now that the old man's taken to bein' handy with his hands I'm ready to do anythin' that anybody else will."

"Well, hold on," said Peter Black, the oldest of the crew; "let's give 'em a fair show."

"How?"

"Go an' ask the skipper ef he can't put up some better grub for us."

"Much good that'll do," said Jared. "They aint got it in the ship."

However, it was finally decided that the next morning Peter should take a sample of the breakfast aft and make a respectful complaint. If that did not have any effect, the men were to consider what was to be done next. Accordingly in the morning Peter went aft with it and told the Captain that the men could not be expected to work on that kind of food, especially as the brigantine was sailing with a short crew.

"What do you say to that?" asked the Captain, turning to Mr. Brewer, who had come on deck.

"All rubbish! The food is plenty good enough for anyone but a lot of lazy beggars."

"My dear sir," exclaimed Mr. Durand, in a whisper, "such language is positively dangerous."

"You hear what the owner says?" said Captain Sparks; "now get forward with you and don't let me hear any more grumbling. The next man that objects to his food will be treated as a mutineer and put in irons."

"That's the way to talk!" declared Mr. Brewer, while Mr. Durand shook his head in emphatic protest.

Peter went forward and reported the result of his protest. The men said little at the time, but they cast many angry looks at the three persons on the quarter deck. During the remainder of the day the work of the brigantine was carried on in a most careless and slovenly fashion, yet it was not so badly neglected as to give the Captain an excuse for taking extreme measures. Mr. Durand, however, was in a sad state of mind. He declared it to be his belief that they were on the brink of a precipice and that the first unwise word would lead to their downfall.

"Rubbish, sir; all rubbish!" exclaimed Mr. Brewer.

"My friend," said Captain Sparks, "sailors always grumble. I have something in my hip-pocket that will restore order in five minutes if any disturbance arises."

But Mr. Durand remained in a doubting and uncomfortable state of mind. About nine o'clock that night, just as the vessel had settled down into the quiet run of the first watch, a series of unearthly, muffled yells came from the fore-castle. Mr. Durand nearly fainted, but when the Captain started forward and Mr. Brewer followed, the school-master felt impelled to go also, rather than remain in the cabin with no other protection than the cabin-steward, a mere lad. The three men found the whole crew assembled around the dark and yawning mouth of the fore-hatch, gazing into the blackness with solemn faces.

"What's the matter here?" demanded Captain Sparks.

"We don't know, sir," answered Peter.

"Who was that yelling?"

"None on us can tell, sir. We're all here, and the yells came from down there."

The Captain looked around and saw that the members of the crew were all present.

"Why haven't some of you gone down to find out what caused the noise?"

"Bless you, sir, none on us would go down there for love or money. Them screams didn't come from nothin' mortal."

"My dear friend," said Mr. Durand, "you certainly do not believe in ghosts?"

"Mebbe you don't, sir, and so perhaps you'll go down."

"It would—ah—hardly be becoming in me to assume so much—ah—authority."

"I'll go myself," said the Captain, shortly. "Bring me a lantern."

The lantern was brought and the Captain dropped down the hatch. As soon as he had gone well forward, Jared Lure said:

"Perhaps you two gentlemen 'd better go down and help the Captain."

Before Mr. Brewer and Mr. Durand could protest, they were seized and forced down the hatch, and the next instant the cover was slammed down and fastened.

"Now," said Jared, "I reckon we'll all go aft and eat good grub in the cabin."

The crew of the brigantine had mutinied.

CHAPTER XXIII

JACK TARS ALL ADRIFT

WHEN Jared and his friends had seated themselves in the cabin, the steward was summoned.

"See here, you son of a sea-cook," said Jared, "we want you to understand that hereafter we are the captain o' this vessel, and we're goin' to feed on the best you've got."

"All right, sir," said the steward, who was quaking with fear.

"That's right; be respectful and you'll keep a whole skin," said Peter.

"Oh, I'll be respectful," said the lad.

"And now you just get to work an' set out a good honest meal here fur us."

"Right away, sir, right away."

The man at the wheel looked down through the skylight and said :

"Say, you fellers, don't forget that I ain't had nothin' yet, an' that somebody's got to relieve me."

"Oh, you shut up!" bawled one of the seamen.

"Yes, but if I don't git took care of, I'll let the wheel go."

"Well, let her go. Who the dickens cares?"

"Hold on! Hold on!" cried Peter. "This sort o' thing won't do."

"Not by a jugful," added Jared. "We got to have order in this here ship, now we got her into our possession."

"You kin have all the order you want," cried the man at the wheel, "so long as I get my grub."

"You'll get your grub all right," said Jared.

"An' you'll get relieved, too," said Peter.

The steward arrived pretty soon with some cold ham, pickles, and other delicacies of a sea-larder, and placed them on the table.

"Why don't you give us somethin' hot?" yelled one of the men.

"Gentlemen," said the frightened steward, "I'd be very glad to serve you some hot soup if you'd wait for it a little, but I thought you were all in a great hurry."

"Well," said Jared, "you go ahead and get the hot soup ready, and while you're at it we'll tackle the cold ham and stuff."

"That ain't the way to eat a dinner," said Peter, "meat first and soup after?"

"It's good enough for us," said one of the other seamen; "we ain't no swells at all from Fifth Avnoo."

The steward, who had been forward to the galley, now entered and said:

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen, but the Captain is pounding on the deck forward most dreadful, and he says he'd like to speak to somebody."

"Who's goin' to be spoke to?" asked one of the men.

"Nobody," cried another. "Let him pound away till he gets tired. He's made us work till we was tired pretty often."

"Hold on! Hold on!" said Peter. "Let's find out what's a-worryin' him."

"Not till we has our grub," said another seaman.

"That's the talk. Let him wait," were the cries.

So the steward proceeded to serve the hot soup, which he had prepared, and the sailors made a hearty meal.

"An' now, steward," said Jared, "has the gent that was Captain o' this brigantine got any good cigars stowed away in his lockers?"

"No, sir, but Mr. Brewer has plenty."

"Well, they'll do well enough for us, I guess."

"Break 'em out, steward," cried the seamen.

The steward went and fetched a box of cigars, which he opened and passed around. The men were soon engaged in blowing clouds of smoke, and one hand was despatched to relieve the man at the wheel. As he arose to go, he said :

"What's the course?"

The men sat bolt upright in their chairs and stared blankly at one another.

"Blowed if I know!" exclaimed Jared.

"An' I'm sure I don't," said Peter.

"Here, Squilgee!" cried one of the seamen through the skylight to the man at the wheel, "what's the course?"

"South three-quarters west an' be blowed to you, you gluttons!" yelled the helmsman.

"Good!" ejaculated Jared. "Go up an' steer that, old grampus."

"Aye, aye, mate," said the man, starting, "but I never heard o' steerin' one course the whole v'yage."

The man went out and the helmsman shortly afterward entered the cabin and attacked his dinner with a will.

"You fellers is a swell lot with yer cigars, ain't ye?" he said.

"Well," exclaimed Peter, pitching his through an open port, "I'll be keelhauled if I like a

stick o' baccy except fur a chaw. Steward, got any good pipe-baccy?"

"Yes, sir," answered the nervous lad, "the Captain has some first-rate smoking-tobacco."

"Break it out lively, then."

Most of the men threw away their cigars when they found that smoking-tobacco could be obtained, and they looked much more like themselves with their old black pipes between their hairy jaws.

"Nor, who's a-goin' forrad to talk to the old man?" asked Peter.

"W'y don't you go yourself?" demanded one.

"No," answered Peter, "I ain't got no call fur talkin'. Let Jared go."

"Yes, Jared, Jared! He's our man!" cried the sailors.

This was just what Jared had been waiting for.

"Well," he said, "before I go, I'd like to know just how much authority I'm to have. We ain't got no officers now."

The men smoked in silence for a few minutes, and then Peter, with some deliberation, said:

"I reckon, men, that we got to have some kind o' head or tail to this ship's company, so I move that we elect Jared Lure our skipper."

"Right! Good! Jared's the man!"

"Then all in favor o' Jared bein' skipper say 'aye'."

A resounding "aye" was the response, and there were no negative votes.

"That matter bein' disposed of, I 'spose we may as well let Jared manage this business," said Peter.

"I'll begin," said Jared, "by appointin' you my first mate. The brigantine ain't had one before."

This appointment met with general approval, and Jared arose to go and parley with the imprisoned Captain. The conversation was brief and to the point.

"If I let you out," said Jared, "what guarantee has the crew that you'll feed 'em decent, not overwork 'em, an' give no information about 'em when we get to port?"

"You'll have to take my word for it," answered the Captain.

"What do you mean to do with my brigantine!" demanded Mr. Brewer. "Remember that you have committed a crime in seizing her."

"My esteemed friend," said Mr. Durand, "conciliatory measures will surely be the wisest."

"Tell the school-master to shut up," said

Jared. "As for you, Mr. Brewer, you're our prisoner and you'd better be respectful."

"If you men will release us," said the Captain, "we'll not give any information."

"And you'll give us the same food as you have in the cabin?"

"Preposterous!" exclaimed Mr. Brewer. "It would be ruinous to me."

"You hear what the owner says?" said the Captain. "You had better release us. You don't dare to carry this vessel into any port. You'd be convicted of mutiny at once."

"That's our lookout," said Jared.

"You haven't any one to navigate the brigantine," said the Captain.

"That's our lookout, too," said Jared. "But we'll let you out if you'll take her where we tell you to."

The Captain knew they had no navigator, and he thought he saw signs of indecision in Jared's speech. He answered:

"No, she must go to her port of destination."

"That won't do," said Jared, sharply. "You stay where you are."

So saying, he returned to the cabin and reported the result of the parley to the men.

"We haven't no navigator, that's a fact," said Peter.

“Why can’t we steer west till we make the land?” said one of the men.

“That’s too dangerous,” answered Jared.

“Then,” said Peter, solemnly, “there don’t seem to be nothin’ fur us to do but to go on steerin’ south three-quarters west.”

And they all sat and stared stupidly at one another.

CHAPTER XXIV

A DRIFTING WRECK

"JESS wot I s'pected," said Porgy.

"What's that?" asked Meredith.

"The fog's a-swallerin' the sound."

"Do you think the other boats are close enough to hear us?" asked Johnny.

"My son," said Porgy, "preehaps you've heerd that old sayin' about the kind o' pusson wot kin ax more questions in a minute than a wise man kin answer in a hour. As the widder use ter say——"

"Oh, Porgy, please!" exclaimed Miss Mittykins, "let the widow rest a little while."

"You blow the fog-horn!"

Miss Mittykins blew another long blast, which echoed dismally against the dead-wall of the gray fog.

"I reckon it are no good," muttered Porgy.

"Mebbe we done see 'em w'en de fawg lift," said Scipio.

"Yes, an' mebbe we done don't," snorted Porgy.

"If we don't, what shall we do?" asked Johnny.

"Steer for Fort Monroe, I vote," said Miss Mittykins, in a calm voice.

"Wagh!" exclaimed Porgy, in great disgust. "You children don't know nothin' an' so ye don't fear nothin'. We better steer jess the way we was told to."

"And run the chance of being captured by a rebel ship," said Meredith.

"That are better'n bein' drowned, ain't it?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Miss Mittykins; "I've never been either myself."

"Hark!" exclaimed Johnny, leaning far over the gunwale of the boat.

They all sat motionless and intent, but there was no sound save that of the water rippling under the boat's forefoot.

"I thought I heard the sound of a fog-horn far off," said Johnny. "There! There it is again!"

"I heerd that," said Porgy; "but it warn't no fog-horn."

"What was it then?" demanded Meredith.

"It war a porpoise a-blowin'."

They all relapsed into silence, and sat damp and dejected in their garment of mist. The little boat drove gently along before the wind,

and Porgy sat with one hand feeling the tiller, and the other supporting his chin as he stared moodily into the compass-bowl. The three youngsters of the boat's crew could not realize the gravity of their situation, because the weather was quiet and the boat was moving easily. To be sure, there was still a heavy swell, but it was broad and smooth and the boat rose and fell almost imperceptibly.

"I wish the fog would clear up," said Johnny, disconsolately.

"Of course you do, and so do the rest of us," said Morton. "You don't suppose we enjoy this sort of thing, do you?"

"Be keerful, marine, be keerful," said Porgy. "Don't git disrespectful to a sailor man."

In spite of their situation they could not help laughing at the notion of Johnny's being a "sailor man."

"I don't know what influence you have with the elements," said Miss Mittykins, "but I think your wish is going to be gratified."

"The lad's right," exclaimed Porgy, looking around him; "we'll soon find out whether anythin's in sight."

It was broad daylight now and the rising sun had begun to burn through the mist. The fog began to gather into shreds of writhing smoke

and to drift away to leeward before the gentle wind. Here and there patches of blue showed overhead, and the ripples occasionally sparkled with a flash of sunlight. The spirits of the little party in the boat rose with this change in the weather.

"With such weather as this we can keep the sea a month," said Meredith.

"That's true enough," answered Miss Mittykins.

"Wot's the good?" inquired Porgy.

"Mebbe we git pick up by a Union ship," said Scipio.

"Humph!" was all the reply that Porgy made.

As the fog cleared away, the breeze died out entirely, and left the little boat rising and falling on broad, glassy swells in the pitiless glare of a broiling sun.

"I'd like to jump overboard and have a swim," said Meredith.

"That's a good idea," said Johnny; "why shouldn't we?"

"Avast there!" said Porgy. "Ye don't know nothin'. Jess look yonder."

They turned their glances in the direction indicated by the old seaman's gesture, and saw the triangular black fin of a shark rising above the water.

"I guess I don't want to swim," said Meredith, reaching over the side of the boat for a handful of water, which he poured upon his head.

"Take a drink, lad," said Porgy. "We got enough water to last four days here."

"And plenty to eat, too," said Miss Mittykins.

"But the heat of the sun is dreadful," said Morton.

"Ye feels it more w'en you're so close to the water," said Porgy; "but I reckon as how we'll git a breeze from the south'ard by arternoon, an' then we'll be more comf'table."

"What's that away down there?" asked Johnny, who had been straining his gaze toward the southern horizon.

The little boat's company turned their heads and studied the object, which appeared to be a mere black spot on the distant rim of the sea.

"Looks like a rock," said Meredith.

"Or more like a boat," said Miss Mittykins.

"Dat's what 'tis!" exclaimed Scipio. "I see um move on de swell. It's one o' dem odder boats."

"How'd she git so fur to' the south'ard?" demanded Porgy.

"Dunno, chile, dunno," said Scipio; "but dat's a boat, suah!"

"She can't be more than three or four miles away," said Meredith; "why not pull slowly down toward her?"

"I reckon that might be done, if you feel like rowin'," answered Porgy.

"I do," said Johnny, and Miss Mittykins seized an oar. The next minute the whale-boat was moving steadily southward, propelled by that slow, swinging stroke that men-o'-war's men know so well how to pull. When she had advanced about a mile, Porgy said:

"That ain't no boat."

"What on earth is it, then?" asked Johnny.

"It are a ship—a wreck," answered Porgy.

They all turned and studied the distant object, and came to the conclusion that Porgy was right. A light breeze now sprang up, and so Johnny said:

"I vote we go and have a look at her."

"It won't take us much out of our way," said Meredith.

Porgy, who thought that they might obtain extra supplies from the wreck, assented, and the whale-boat was headed toward her under sail. The little crew were silent for a time under the influence of those serious thoughts which the sight of a wreck at sea always causes. As they approached the vessel, it was seen that she was

a brig or schooner, both of whose masts had been carried away less than ten feet above the deck. Her rail was smashed into splinters, and her bowsprit had been broken short off at the gammoning. The dangling boat-falls at her empty stern-davits told that she had been abandoned.

"A couple of bloomin' rotten sticks," said Porgy, surveying the stumps of the masts, "wot went overboard in a squall, I reckon, an' left the vessel to waller helpless in the trough."

"What made them abandon her?" asked Johnny; "couldn't they get a jury rig on her and work her into port?"

"Hear the old sailor!" laughed Porgy. "Preehaps they didn't have no spare spars nor canvas, an' they had to cut their own adrift arter they went over, to keep 'em from punchin' holes into her."

"Are we going to board her?" asked Miss Mittykins.

"In course," answered Porgy.

"Mebbe we git plenty good grub," said Scipio.

"And I wouldn't mind a chance to stretch my legs a bit," said Morton.

"We'll have a bloomin' dress-parade fur you, my sojer friend," growled Porgy.

The sails of the whale-boat were furled and her masts unstepped, and she was rowed under the stern of the vessel, where the bowman caught one of the dangling falls. Miss Mittykins, with a laugh, danced lightly forward and climbed the fall to the taffrail.

"Wait a minute!" he cried, as the others were about to follow; "I'll throw you a line and haul you under the lee main chains."

The boy did as he promised and in a few moments all were aboard.

"Let the boat drop astern," said Porgy, "an' make her fast there."

Johnny, who had taken the line from Miss Mittykins, executed Porgy's order. Mittykins was dancing a hornpipe, and Scipio was shaking with laughter, while Morton walked up and down stiffly. They all felt the effects of being so long cramped in a small boat.

"An' now," said Porgy, "let's overhaul her stores. She seems tight, an' I reckon we'll find things good."

All hands went below, and, as the old seaman had predicted, found plenty of sound and sweet provisions and water. It was evident that the vessel had not been abandoned long and that her crew had departed in a hurry. A brief consultation led to the decision that they

should stock the whale-boat and then endeavor to make their way to the coast.

"Run aft," said Porgy to Meredith, "and get the boat alongside."

Meredith went to the stern, where he paused, threw up his hands, and uttered a loud cry.

"What's up!" shouted Porgy.

"The boat!" he answered; "the boat is gone!"

CHAPTER XXV

WAITING FOR A SAIL

A HURRIED glance showed the little group the whale-boat drifting peacefully before the gentle breeze, half a mile away. Not a word was spoken for fully a minute, while Johnny, who had made her fast so carelessly, sat down with his head in his hands. Suddenly he sprang up.

"Why," he exclaimed, "I can easily swim to her. I've covered double the distance often."

The boy started to remove his clothing, but Porgy seized his arm.

"My son," he said, "I reckon you furgit about that shark's fin."

"Oh, Johnny!" said Morton, "you mustn't do it."

"Guess we done bettah stay right hyar," said Scipio, "till we git tuk off. Plenty good grub."

"Give that heathen grub," said Porgy, "an' he's all right."

"Pretty sensible, too," said Meredith.

"It's all my fault," began Johnny; but Porgy stopped him.

"No, 't isn't, lad; it's mine. I'd ort 'a' knowed better'n to send a green hand to make a boat fast. Howsumever, as the widder used ter say, ef ye can't git pie, eat bread. This 'ere wessel under us are bread."

"You're all too good about it," said Johnny.

"Stow that now," said Meredith. "Where's Scipio?"

"In the galley, starting a fire," said Morton.

"Hurrah! We'll have hot coffee pretty soon!" cried Miss Mittykins, dancing another hornpipe.

"I wonder now ef we can't git some kind o' rig onto this 'ere hooker an' make her move," muttered Porgy.

Another search was made over the entire vessel, but nothing was found that would serve as a spar.

"It are a clear case o' driftin' an' waitin'," said Porgy.

"Suppose heavy weather should come on," said Meredith.

"Then we must rig a drag, I reckon. Some o' them big boxes below with weight in to sink 'em would work all right an' keep her head to the sea," answered the old sailor.

"De high golly, chillen!" cried Scipio, from the caboose forward; "come hyar an' git yo' insides het up."

The little company, having no seaman's duties to perform aboard the drifting hulk, went forward and found that Scipio had prepared some steaming coffee. As they drank it their spirits rose.

"Dat plenty good, humph?" cried Scipio.

"That are wot it are," said Porgy, nodding his head approvingly.

"I tell you, Scipio," exclaimed Meredith, "you're a genuine brick."

"Brick!" said Johnny; "don't call him a brick. Bricks sink."

They all laughed heartily at Johnny's little jest, for they were in a mood now to laugh at anything. But when they had finished the coffee, Porgy called them all to attention, and said:

"There ain't no tellin' how long we're a-goin' to be a-floatin' aroun' on this 'ere old hooker, an' I reckon as how we'd better make up our minds about wot we're a-goin' fur to do."

"Why," said Meredith, "you told us that it would be simply a case of drifting and waiting, didn't you?"

"Werry good; but s'posin' we' have to drift

an' wait fur about a month; don't you think you might git putty tired o' sittin' aroun' doin' nothin'?"

"Yes, I guess I would," said Meredith.

"Then le's decide on doin' somethin'."

"Well," said Johnny, "someone ought to be on watch all the time for a sail."

"In course," said Porgy, gravely; "we'll put two hands on at a time fur reg'lar watches."

"And," said Mittykins, "we ought to have some way of attracting attention if we sight a vessel far off."

"Smoke!" cried Scipio. "Smoke fotch him. He think us afire, an' bear down."

"How shall we make the smoke?" asked Morton.

"That are no worry hard matter, my marine friend," said Porgy. "We gets up some o' them boxes wot's b'low, breaks 'em up, puts a leetle water onto 'em an' sets 'em afire."

"Where?"

"On the deck, o' course. W'ere'd you s'pose, down in the water?"

This time the company laughed at Morton, who, being a marine, was now quite accustomed to the ridicule of sailors. But his question was not a foolish one, for even Miss Mittykins supported it.

"Won't that set the deck afire?" he asked.

"Preehaps," answered Porgy, "but ef we got a wessel bearin' down fur to take us off, wot'll we care!"

"Suppose," said Meredith, "that she pays no attention to our signal and we are afire; what then?"

"Surely," exclaimed Johnny, "they wouldn't pass us if we were burning!"

Porgy shook his head solemnly.

"Not ef she flew the right flag," he said; "but some on 'em ain't noted fur kindness at sea. No, I reckon we got to be forehanded ag'in gettin' the hull afire."

"I fix him! I fix him!" cried Scipio. "Dere lot o' sheet-iron on de inside de caboose. We pull dat off, an' put 't on de deck."

"An' werry good, too," said Porgy, emphatically.

Miss Mittykins and Johnny were detailed to watch-duty, one on top of the cabin and the other on top of the caboose, those being the highest practicable points left on the vessel. There they paced up and down sweeping the empty horizon with eager eyes, while the others set to work to strip the iron sheathing from the walls of the cook-house. When that task was completed, they rigged a tackle to

hoist some of the boxes from below. That was a difficult task, as there were no spars aloft to give the necessary purchase; but a sailor's resources are equal to almost any problem aboard ship. A kedge anchor was found forward, and the stock was taken off the shank. A hole was cut in the deck beside the fore-hatch, and the shank of the anchor set up in it. The arm now made a tolerable spar to rig a tackle on, and so the boxes were hoisted out of the hold. Meredith and Morton chopped them up, and in about two hours all was ready for building a signal-fire in case a vessel should heave in sight. Johnny and Miss Mittykins were relieved by Meredith and one of the other men, but their watch proved unfruitful. The day wore on slowly, but not a sail of any kind was seen.

" Might as well be down in the South Pacific," grumbled Meredith.

" Anyhow," said Porgy, " we're mos' likely a-driftin' to the norrad all the time, 'cos I s'pose we're in the stream."

" What stream?" inquired Johnny.

" The gulf stream, he means," said Miss Mittykins.

Watches were maintained throughout the night, but not a light, except the stars, was seen.

"Got plenty good grub, anyhow," said Scipio, with an air of complete satisfaction.

"That are a blessin', too," murmured Porgy.

The second day was as barren as the first. Not a sail was seen. The rim of the horizon was as clear and as hard as the sharp edge of a sheet of glass. The only object in all the wide expanse of waters was the rolling, mastless hulk on which they were helplessly drifting. As the first light of the third day brought out the yellow brink of the eastern sea, the clear voice of Miss Mittykins cried :

"Steamer on the starboard bow!"

In an instant the little crew was on deck in a state of feverish excitement.

"W'ere are she?" cried Porgy, sweeping the horizon with his keen eyes. "W'y, it are only smoke!"

"Well, a column of smoke like that means a steamer, doesn't it?" said the boy.

"Sure 'nuff!" exclaimed Scipio. "Now we make smoke, too."

"An' they'll see 't an' think it are the smoke o' another steamer an' pay no attention," said Porgy.

"But let us try it," cried Johnny, running to fire the wood.

In a few minutes, a column of thick brown

smoke was rolling upward. For an hour they watched the distant column, but instead of growing higher, it sank and sank, till it finally disappeared behind the sea.

"She were a-goin' to the east'ard," said Porgy, with an air of great disappointment.

"One o' dem smaht English blockade-run-nahs homewa'd boun'," said Scipio.

The rest were silent, for they were beginning to be sadly discouraged. Porgy noted this, and said, briskly :

"Don' get down, lads ; the sea's got to show a sail pretty soon. It can't go bare all the time."

They passed the morning watch, as they were accustomed to, in washing down decks and generally cleaning ship. In fact, Porgy insisted on carrying out, as far as possible, the sea-routine of a cruiser, in order to give them something to do. Twice a day he drilled them at marching and facing, and he found other occupations for heavy hours. The first dog-watch on this day was Johnny's and Miss Mittykins's, and a dull, hot watch it was, the deck fairly steaming under the sun, and the hulk rolling with unusual sluggishness. Johnny, at about five o'clock, woke with a start from a momentary doze and hastily glanced around the sea. Then for an instant his heart

stopped beating and he stood breathless. The next second he roared, at the top of his lungs:

“Sail ho!”

All hands were afoot in a trice and surveying the stranger.

“A werry tidy lookin’ brigantine,” said Porgy, “a-headin’ athwart our hawse an’ not more’n seven mile away. I reckon this are our chance.”

After the first futile fire more boxes had been hoisted out and chopped up. It was the work of a very few minutes to wet down this wood and start a fire. A goodly column of smoke rolled up and they all turned to watch the brigantine. For a few seconds she held her course.

“Is she going to desert us?” exclaimed Johnny.

“Avast there,” said Porgy, “give her time to move.”

The words were hardly out of his mouth before the foretopsail yard of the stranger was seen to swing slowly and her head began to fall off.

“Wha’d I tole you? Wha’d I tole you?” screamed Scipio. “Smoke ’e’ fotch ’em ebbery time.”

“She are a-comin’, sure enough,” said Porgy, “but she ain’t took us off yet.”

CHAPTER XXVI

PORGY AND COMPANY UNDER HATCHES

THE brigantine was now pointing her slender jib-boom directly at the wreck. She came down with her creamy sails swelling beautifully against the clear blue sky, as her lean topgallant masts swung well out to leeward, and with a smother of yeasty foam under her lee bow.

"A right smart little clipper," said Meredith.

"She don't show any flag, that I can see," said Miss Mittykins.

"You couldn't see no flag from here," said Porgy, "'cos she are a-headin' almost right toward us."

It was fully an hour before the brigantine was abreast of the wreck. She swept up into the wind a quarter of a mile away and proceeded to lower away a boat.

"That are a werry satisfactory business," said Porgy.

"Yes, that looks as if they certainly meant to take us off," added Meredith.

"Do you think they might refuse when they find that this vessel is not really afire?" asked Johnny.

"Not unless they are a set of brutes," exclaimed Morton.

"W'ich sometimes they is," said Porgy, sentimentously.

The little company became silent and watched the approaching boat with some anxiety. It was a large yawl, pulled by three men in the nondescript costumes of merchant seamen, while a third stood in the stern and steered with an oar. His dress did not distinguish him in any degree from the men at the oars, and what might be his position or rank aboard the brigantine could be only a matter of conjecture to the shipwrecked men-o'-war's men. When the boat had approached within fifty yards of the hulk, the man in the stern ordered the oarsmen to cease rowing, and sent to our friends a hoarse hail:

"Wreck there! Are ye on fire?"

"No," returned Porgy, "we sot the fire fur a signal."

"Signal o' what?"

"I reckon wot are plain enough," said Porgy; "we're onto a dismasted hull an' can't get nowhere."

"Why don't ye put a jury rig onto her?"

"Ain't got no spars."

The man in the boat said something to his companions, and then called out again:

"Who are ye?"

"We're a party o' shipwrecked mariners," answered Porgy.

"That ain't a answer."

"I'd like to ax you a question, ef ye don't mind," said Porgy. "Wot brigantine are that, an' where are she boun'?"

"I don't know's I'm obligated to tell you that," said the man. "But I reckon you're a Union sailor, an' so I'll tell you. She's a Northern wessel, from Boston fur St. Kitt's. Now who are you an' how'd ye come aboard that wreck?"

"S'pose ye take us off fust," said Porgy.

"Are you men-o'-war's men?"

"Yes; there's no need to deny that."

"Got your arms with ye?"

"No; our boat, that had 'em in, went adrift."

The man looked as if he were greatly relieved, but he answered:

"Sorry for that; we'd like to 'a' had 'em aboard."

He gave a command to his crew, and they pulled alongside the wreck.

"Tumble in," said he, "an' ye can spin me yer yarn as we row over."



"WE'RE A PARTY O' SHIPWRECKED MARINERS," ANSWERED PORGY.

"Plenty good grub here," said Scipio; "good to take it aboard yo' brigantine."

"We'll send the boat back to overhaul it," said the man.

Our friends clambered down into the yawl and pushed off from the side of the wreck, which now, deserted and smoking, made a dismal picture.

"We was a part o' a prize crew," said Porgy, "put on board the rebel cruiser Osceola by the Union ship Mohawk. The Osceola'd been putty well plugged full o' holes in the fight, an' we'n the gale come on, a few days ago, she couldn't keep afloat. The crew left her in three boats an' we got scattered in a fog. We sighted that hulk, boarded her, an' found her tight. I dunno's we'd 'a stayed there, but our boat got adrift an' so we had to. I reckon as how it were fur the best."

"Mebbe," said the man. "There ain't no officer among ye, I see."

"No; no officer."

"Any petty officer?"

"No; not a one."

"Humph!" exclaimed the man, looking much displeased.

"Are ye short o' officers aboard the brigantine?" asked Porgy.

"Wot's that to you?" demanded the man, sharply.

"Oh, nothin'," said Porgy, "only I been to sea a good many year an' I've sarved as second mate on a clipper ship. But mebbe you're the second mate yourself."

"I'm the fust mate."

"Beggin' yer pardon, sir," said Porgy, gravely saluting.

"'Tain't no matter," answered the first mate.

For a few minutes there was no sound in the boat except the dull click of the oars in the rowlocks. Then Porgy, who had been in a brown study, asked:

"Ain't ye afraid to be so close to the coast o' the secession States wi' your brigantine?"

"Who says we're close?" exclaimed the first mate, with a start of surprise.

"Wall," answered Porgy, "I ain't sayin' it edzackly, 'cos I ain't none too sure o' my own reckonin' since I been afloat in a boat an' onto a wreck; but I reckon we ain't more'n a hundred mile to the east'ard o' land."

"I guess our cap'n knows where we are," said the first mate, with an airy toss of his head.

Something in the man's manner made Porgy suspect that he was not so confident as he pre-

tended to be, but as a measure of precaution he remained silent, and the rest of the Mohawk's crew imitated his example. The boat was now close to the brigantine, which was lying to with her headsails aback. Several roughly clad sailors leaned over the rail and gazed with curiosity at the party in the boat.

A man with an air of authority was walking up and down on the weather side of the cabin, and when the boat was off the weather quarter, he hailed her :

"Who are them you're bringin', Mr. Black?"

"Shipwrecked men-o'-war's men, Ja—sir!" was the reply.

"Have they got their arms with 'em?" was the immediate inquiry.

"No, they ain't got any arms at all."

"Oh," said the captain, pausing an instant and then adding, "that's too bad."

Porgy's suspicions were aroused by this anxiety about the arms. A dozen different surmises flashed through his mind, but he could not make any of them quite fit the situation. At first he thought the vessel might be a Southern transport, laden with stores; but he dismissed that idea with the reflection that it would be folly to use a sailing-vessel for such a service, in the face of the fact that Southern

waters were full of Union cruisers and gun-boats. Next he wondered whether she might not be a freebooter of some kind, but the general appearance of the men in the boat made that supposition seem groundless. Yet the old seaman could not get rid of the feeling that something was wrong. He ran his experienced eye over the vessel, but her rig was in good order and she appeared to be handled with skill. She flew no flag, but of course that was to be expected. Flags are seldom shown at sea except for purposes of communication. The other members of the Mohawk's crew watched Porgy's face keenly, and they all knew that the old seaman was filled with uneasiness, a feeling which quickly spread among them. Porgy would have given a year's pay to be able to hold a minute's consultation with his companions, but of course that was quite out of the question. The boat was now under the lee quarter of the brigantine and a hand on deck hove her a line, by which she was hauled up to the main chains.

"Now then, you men, tumble aboard," said the first mate.

"Aye, aye, sir," came the ready response of the men-o'-war's men.

They clambered over the vessel's rail, touch-

ing their caps as they reached the deck, and formed in a line facing inboard.

"Who's in command here?" demanded the captain of the brigantine.

"Wal, sir," said Porgy, "I, bein' the oldest seaman, was ordered to take charge o' the boat wot we was in, an' so I s'pose I'm in command yit, though the boat are gone adrift."

"How did you come aboard that wreck?"

Porgy once more briefly told the story of the fight, the foundering of the *Osceola*, and their adventures in the boat and on the wreck.

"There ain't no officer, an' I guess there ain't even a petty officer, amongst ye, is there?"

"No, sir," said Porgy; "but I were a-tellin' yer mate, sir, as how I been in the merchant sarvice an' sarved as second mate, sir."

"It's a navigator I want," said the captain, curtly.

"W'y, can't ye navigate her yerself?" exclaimed Porgy, in great surprise.

"Of course, of course," answered the captain, hastily; "but I want some one to help me."

The captain now stepped to the rail and spoke to his first mate.

"Why don't you get your boat hoisted, Peter?"

"I tell ye, Ja—I mean sir—they fellers says there's lots o' good grub aboard the wreck."

"By the great hook-block! That's what we want, isn't it? You go over an' git a good cargo of 't."

"You bet I will," answered the first mate, with a loud, coarse laugh.

As the boat pulled away, the captain turned from the rail and strode up and down the deck as if in deep debate with himself.

"You men stand by here a few minutes," he said, as he went forward.

Porgy's eyes eagerly followed his every movement, and it did not ease the old seaman's mind to see this rude captain join his crew on the forecastle and enter into an earnest consultation with them. Their varying expressions and their frequent looks toward our friends showed plainly what was the topic of their talk.

"Thar's somethin' wrong here," said Porgy, quickly and in a low tone; "I'm of the idee that it are a case o' mutiny. These 'ere men has got rid o' their officers, an' havin' got per-session o' the brigantine, they don't know wot to do, 'cos they ain't got no navigator. An' now we comes aboard an' they're afraid to let us know the truth. All on ye keep mum an'

keep yer weather eye on me, while I watch fur squalls. Now stan' by, he's comin'."

"I've asked my men," said the captain, coming up, "if they can make room fur you in the foks'le, an' they says they can. I reckon ye'll be willin' to turn to an' help work the brigantine, won't ye?"

"In course we will, sir," answered Porgy, heartily.

"Then go right below an' settle about the bunks. When ye come on deck ag'in I'll give ye your watches."

Porgy led the way forward, where the men of the brigantine's crew were clustered near the fore hatch. When the men-o'-war's men had arrived, the hatch was thrown open and one of the seamen said:

"Tumble down quick now!"

The naval sailors did as they were bid, and as the last man stepped down the hatch-cover was slammed down and fastened, while above it a peal of hoarse laughter sounded.

"Salt mackerel an' yaller dogs!" exclaimed Porgy; "we're in a trap."

CHAPTER XXVII

SURPRISES IN THE FOREPEAK

FOR a few moments our friends were so amazed that, with the exception of Porgy's quick exclamation, not a word was spoken. They stood quite still under the closed hatch, gazing at one another in the almost impenetrable gloom. At length Scipio shifted uneasily from one foot to the other and muttered:

"Don't b'lieve dey much good grub down hyar."

Serious as their situation seemed to them, they all smiled at the negro's words.

"You don't suppose they'd starve us, do you?" said Johnny.

"My son," answered Porgy, "that are one o' them things wot nobody can tell. A body o' mutineers ain't no pic-nic party."

"Hark!" exclaimed Johnny; "what noise is that?"

They all listened intently for a moment, and Miss Mittykins spoke lightly:

"Even I can tell that it's the creaking of the foretopsail yard."

"Yes, they're filling away on her again," said Meredith.

"Where do you think they intend to take us?" asked Johnny.

"That are wot they doesn't know themselves," said Porgy. "I'm sartain that wot I told you are right. They ain't got no navigator, an', finding that we hadn't none neither, an' was too many to be safe, they jess got us down here out o' the way."

"Can't we get through into the after part of the vessel, and so get out?" asked Johnny.

"I reckon not," said Porgy; "these 'ere flush-deck wessels ain't ginerally built that way."

"Then," said Miss Mittykins, "we may as well set about making ourselves comfortable right here."

"Here are bunks," said Morton, who had been walking around the place.

"They belong to the crew," remarked Meredith.

"Not now, lad," said Porgy. "This 'ere crew are a-livin' aft in the cabin."

"I wonder if they are well armed," said Johnny.

"Shouldn't wonder," answered Porgy; "an' even ef they wasn't, we ain't armed at all."

The friends were silent again. The gloom of the closed forecastle was crushingly oppressive to them, accustomed as they were to the spacious, light, and airy gun-deck of the Mohawk. The air was heavy and foul with the odor of bilge-water. The whole place, too, resounded with pitiful groanings and complainings as the vessel rolled across the restless surface of the sea.

"Wal," muttered Porgy, "as the widder used ter say, this are a fine can to stew termaters in."

It was the first time Porgy had spoken of "the widder" for several days, and the friends hailed it as a sign that his spirits were not so low as they had seemed to be. Suddenly Johnny, who had gone toward the forward end of the forecastle, called out:

"Here's a hole leading to the deck below."

Porgy hastened forward, followed by the others, and found a small, rudely cut opening in the deck.

"Wal," he said, reflectively, "that are kind o' cur'ous. That ain't no reg'lar manhole. It are jess been made, too."

"What do you suppose it's for?" asked Meredith.

"I don't know," answered Porgy, "but I reckon I'm a-goin' to find out."

So saying, he thrust his legs down through the hole, preparatory to dropping to the deck below. He had hardly done so when his face assumed the most ludicrous expression of alarm and amazement, and he began to kick vigorously, shouting, at the same time :

"Let go! Let go!"

The next moment he hauled himself up out of the hole and stood panting in the forecastle.

"What's the matter? What is it?" demanded the friends.

"Somebody grabbed me by the leg!" exclaimed Porgy.

"Yes," came a muffled voice from below, "and I'll blow daylight through the first one of you that makes a move to come down here. I know your game, you skulking lot of cowards, and I'm ready for you."

The men of the Mohawk's crew stood and gazed at one another in blank astonishment. Finally Porgy found his voice and called down :

"Who'n thunder are you?"

"You know well enough," was the unexpected answer.

"I'm blowed into spun yarn ef I do," responded Porgy, stoutly.

"I'm the Captain of this brigantine, and well you know it. Who put me under hatches, if you didn't?"

"We never put you under hatches," answered Porgy. "We're under 'em ourselves."

"Have you fallen out with the rest of the crew?"

"No; we don't b'long to yer bloomin' crew. We're castaways, took aboard from a wreck," said Porgy.

There was a brief silence after this statement, and then the voice from below was heard again.

"I don't know whether to believe you or not."

"Come up an' see."

"Oh, no; let one of your number come down."

A brief consultation was held and it was decided that in the darkness it would be easy for the Captain to assure himself that Scipio was not one of his crew.

"Stand clear b'low!" called Porgy.

The stalwart negro dropped through the hole and the friends above awaited his return in anxious silence. Scipio found himself in the impenetrable blackness of the forepeak, with

piles of spare rigging and old junk under his feet. The moment he alighted his arm was seized in a firm grip and a determined voice said :

“I’ve got a hatchet in my hand and any attempt at trickery will send the edge of it through your brain.”

“’Deed an’ ’deed, sah, dey ’ain’t no tricks ’bout dis hyar niggah.”

“A negro!” exclaimed the Captain, dropping his arm.

“Dat’s me,” answered Scipio.

“Come over here,” said the Captain, leading the sailor forward. “Uncover the lantern.”

Someone in the blackness moved a cloth and revealed a dim lantern that threw a feeble and ghastly light over the strange place. Behind a heavy coil of rope sat two other men, whose pale faces and staring eyes looked deathly in the half-gloom. Scipio gazed at the Captain and these two men in speechless surprise. They in their turn examined him closely.

“Why,” exclaimed the Captain, “what’s this? The uniform of the Navy!”

“’Deed dat’s what it am, sah,” said Scipio. “We done been Uncle Sam’s sailah men, an’ we got adrift. Porgy, he tole yo’ all ’bout it, sah, ef yo’ done come up in de fohc’stle.”

"This looks all right," said the Captain to the other two men. "This negro is certainly not a member of the brigantine's crew. I'll go up and see these men."

"But, my esteemed friend," said one of the crouching men, in an oily tone, "pray consider the extreme value of your precious life to us. Pray, my man, how many of you are there?"

"Dar's eight, sah. Fouah men and fouah boys."

"Eight! My dear sir, you certainly must not venture among them."

"Wouldn't it be better," said the other man, "to have them come down here one at a time?"

"That's a good idea," answered the Captain, moving to the spot under the opening in the deck, and calling up: "Let your company drop down here one at a time as I give the word, the boys first."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered Porgy.

"Let one of the boys down now."

Miss Mittykins chanced to be nearest to the opening, and at a word from Porgy the lad dropped lightly into the forepeak. He walked directly up to the Captain, who led him over to the light and looked him over with great satisfaction.

"Why, this certainly looks all right," he said.
"What's your name?"

"Miss Mittykins, sir."

"'Miss' Mittykins! why, you're not a girl, are you?"

"Oh, sir," said the boy, "that's just a gun-deck nickname. My name is Mittykins, though; apprentice, sir, and at your command aboard your own ship."

"Well spoken, my lad; you're an honest boy, I'll be bound. Let the next one come down."

The second boy down was Meredith, who saluted the Captain respectfully, and gave a satisfactory account of himself. The Captain was now satisfied that all was as Scipio had represented it to be, and he went to the hole and bade the Mohawk people all to come down. They tumbled down in some disorder and stood in a little group.

"An' now, sir," said Porgy, "it aren't no more'n right as we should tell you who we are an' how we came to be aboard a wrack an' so on."

Porgy briefly related the experiences of himself and his friends from the time of the engagement with the Osceola.

"A remarkable story, indeed," said the man with the oily voice; "and an evidence that

your advent among us is due to the special intervention of a beneficent Providence."

At the first sound of this man's voice Johnny Rodgers and Morton Brewer started as if they had been shot, and gazed blankly at one another. Then they both hastily stepped forward into the circle of feeble light and stared at the speaker.

"Old Durand, by crackey!" exclaimed Morton.

"Ha! Ha-a-a! Look there!" shrieked the other man, who now sprang to his feet. "Are you alive?"

"Mr. Brewer!" cried Johnny.

"Father!" shouted Morton, dashing forward and flinging his arms about his parent's neck.

"Oh, Lord!" exclaimed Mr. Durand, rolling his eyes upward, "Thy ways are not our ways."

"Wal," said Porgy, slowly, "ef you're the man I've heerd on, I guess that there statement are about right."

CHAPTER XXVIII

AN EFFORT FOR FREEDOM

THE next hour passed very speedily. Johnny, of course, had to narrate his adventures to his guardian and his former school-master, and the latter was prolific in his expressions of pious amazement. Morton also had his story to tell. When these duties had been performed, Porgy said:

"Mr. Brewer, sir, you bein' this 'ere boy's guardeen, I reckon you got a putty consid'able claim onto him; but I also reckon you can't do much jess now, 'cos he's gone an' apprenticed himself to the Navy."

"And a good thing, too," said Mr. Brewer.

"An' as his shipmate an' teacher," continued Porgy, "I'd like to know wot are a-goin' to be done about his money."

"His money! Oh, his money!" mumbled Mr. Brewer.

"Them's it," said Porgy.

"Why, father," exclaimed Morton, "you forget that he saved my life."

"That's true," said Mr. Brewer, in a humble tone, "I did forget that for the moment. But the money—I have—well, it's a long story and——"

"Never mind it now," said Johnny; "we must save ourselves first."

"Bully!" exclaimed Porgy, "that are good talk fur to listen to, as the widder said w'en the dominie preached two hours."

"Well," said Morton, "I shall never forget Johnny's courage and readiness as long as I live, and I want to make a statement right here and now. Mr. Durand, another fellow and myself did the smoking in Johnny's room at the Tuzo School, and he wouldn't tell on us."

Mr. Durand shifted uneasily from one foot to the other, coughed, and looked uncomfortable.

"I regret," he said, at length, "that I should have been deceived in that matter, but under the circumstances I could take no other course than I did. To err is human; to forgive——"

"Oh, it's all right now, Mr. Durand," said Johnny, heartily. "As long as you and my guardian know that I was not to blame, I'm satisfied."

"And if we ever escape from our present perilous predicament, I shall see to it that the

facts are duly published in Sancet," said Mr. Durand.

"I don't s'pose," remarked Porgy, "that it are any of our business how you got into this 'ere predicament, as you call it; I calls it fore-peak."

"Ahem! Well, I really can't answer that," said Mr. Durand.

"This is Mr. Brewer's brigantine," said Captain Sparks, "and she's engaged in a private expedition."

"The fact is, Morton—and John," said Mr. Brewer, "my fellow-townsmen accused me of secessionist views and made life so unbearable in Sancet, that I have left the place, and in doing so fitted out this vessel with a cargo to make the move profitable to me."

"Then," said Morton, with a smile, "this is our home."

"For the present, yes," said Mr. Brewer.

"But," observed Captain Sparks, "our home is in the hands of what you might call burglars."

"Yes," answered Porgy, "an' it are putty near mess-time, I reckon, an' we'd better not be caught here."

"That's true," said the Captain. "Now that there are so many of us, we may as well stay in

the forecastle. Besides we got through the deck only this morning, and none of my mutinous crew know of it yet, and the secret may be of use to us."

"Then up we goes," said Porgy.

With some difficulty Mr. Brewer and Mr. Durand were assisted to clamber up into the forecastle, and the others, being seamen, followed without trouble. They had hardly reached the place when the hatch-cover was raised a few inches and a voice called down:

"Below there! Stand by to get yer grub w'en it's lowered away; an' mind, no queer business, because we're all armed an' kin shoot."

"Just as I suspected," said the Captain; "they've broken out the arms."

The significance of this speech was not lost on the men-of-war's men, but at a sign from Porgy, Scipio stepped beneath the hatch.

"How many of you is there?" asked the voice.

"That's Peter Black," whispered the Captain.

"Dar's 'lebben ob us, sah," said Scipio.

"As if he didn't know, curse him!" exclaimed Mr. Brewer.

"Oh, you've laid alongside the Cap'n an' his friends have you?" said Black. "Wal, now

you know how things is, an' I guess you'll keep stoppers on yer jaw-tackles. Stand by, now ; we ain't goin' to starve yer."

A large kettle was now cautiously lowered through the hatch, which was instantly closed. It was raised again presently, to admit some bread and water.

"You won't get much satisfaction out of this grub," said the Captain. "Those fellows are living aft on the cabin stores and are feeding us on forecastle grub, and it's none too good. In fact, that's what kicked up all the trouble."

"Dat plenty bad grub," said Scipio, with an air of disgust.

The other men-of-war's men said nothing, but contrived to swallow a little of the ill-smelling compound from the kettle and to wash it down with warm water. Mr. Brewer uttered many exclamations of impatience, and Mr. Durand vainly prayed his esteemed friend to be calm. When the meal had been finished, Captain Sparks said to Porgy:

"Did the fellows on deck let out anything about where they're going to take us?"

"No, sir ; 'cos they don't know theirselves," answered Porgy ; "they ain't got no navigator."

"Of course," answered the Captain, with a

laugh; "I forgot that. I wonder what they'll do."

"They'll git a navigator off some passin' ship, ef they can," said Porgy.

"Easier said than done in these war-times," said the Captain.

"Ef we had arms," said Porgy, "we might contrive to take the brigantine back, ef we could get out o' here."

Mr. Durand started up in alarm, and exclaimed:

"Pray, my dear and honored friends, let us have no bloodshed. Let us trust in measures of peace."

"You can't deal that way with mutineers," objected the Captain. "But it's Mr. Brewer's ship. What do you say, sir?"

"I say," answered Mr. Brewer, "let us get the vessel back if we can. Here are eleven men, of whom seven are naval seamen and one—my son—a marine. These men may be called, fairly, veterans. At any rate they have seen hot service, and I dare say will lend their aid to recapture this vessel."

"That we will, sir! Aye, aye, sir!" came in a chorus from the Mohawk's people.

"Captain Sparks and I will not hesitate, I believe, when the time comes," said Mr. Brewer.

"Not I," said the Captain, heartily; "I'll take a whack at the scoundrels."

"And," continued Mr. Brewer, "if my esteemed friend here, Mr. Durand, desires to keep out of danger, he may remain below."

"What, alone!" exclaimed Mr. Durand, in a tone of alarm; "not for worlds!"

"But what are we to fight with?" asked Meredith.

"I reckon I heard somethin' about breakin' out arms," said Porgy.

"The cargo of this brigantine is arms and ammunition," said the Captain, briefly; "there are enough of them in the after-hold to fit out a brigade."

"Then we got to get 'em," said Porgy.

"Yes, but how?" asked the Captain. "This brigantine has a solid bulkhead between the forepeak and the hold."

"Can't we cut through it," asked Morton, "just as you did through the deck?"

"We could do it," said the Captain, "but they'd catch us at it, I'm afraid, because it would be noisy work, and they'd hear us. It's my belief that they go into the hold pretty often, and the only thing I have to cut with is an old chisel I found down here."

"Hark!" exclaimed Johnny; "what noise is that on deck?"

"Sounds like the tramping of the crew forward," said the Captain.

"We're hove well down to port," said Porgy; "an' we're doin' some consid'ble jumpin' into a lumpy head sea. I reckon it are comin' on to blow an' they're a-shortenin' sail."

"That's what's the matter," said the Captain.

For half an hour the tramping of feet was audible overhead, mingled with hoarse shouts of command and the rattling of blocks. Meanwhile, although the brigantine leaned less sharply to port, she continued to jump into the rising seas, which could now plainly be heard thrashing against her wooden sides.

"This 'ere bit o' weather are a-goin' to be the werry thing we wants," said Porgy, emphatically. "Ef the sea makes enough noise, they won't be able to hear us a-poundin' at the bulkhead."

"And I have a suggestion to offer," said Johnny.

"Wot are it, my son?" asked Porgy.

"In order to save time, we ought to make the hole as small as possible, oughtn't we?"

"Yes; that's so."

"Then make it just big enough for me to

get through; pass the chisel after me; I'll open the boxes and hand the arms and ammunition through," said Johnny.

"Brave boy!" exclaimed the Captain.

"But," said Miss Mittykins, "if they should come down into the hold and catch you, we couldn't do a thing to help you."

"So much the better," said Johnny; "because you would still be safe, and able in the end to beat them."

"Listen!" exclaimed Morton; "the sea is rising fast."

"Good!" ejaculated Porgy; "Johnny's idee are a good one."

Bang! went a heavy sea against the starboard bow. "That's good!" said the Captain. "That's the sort of noise we need."

"Why not go to work at once, then?" cried Johnny, springing to his feet. "The sooner we get the arms the sooner we'll get the brigantine."

"Hurrah!" cried Miss Mittykins, dancing with delight. "Where's your chisel, Captain?"

"Here it is," was the answer, as the Captain reached under a bunk and drew it forth.

"Come on, then," cried Johnny, dropping down the hole into the forepeak.

With glowing eyes and flushed faces the seamen followed him, while Mr. Brewer and Mr. Durand sat in the gloomy fore-castle, filled with anxiety.

CHAPTER XXIX

JOHNNY AND HIS TUNNEL

"Now," said Porgy, "I reckon we'd better cut this 'ere hole putty low down, 'cos then nobody'll likely see it ef he comes inter the hold."

"Mebbe de boxes right ag'in de bulkhead," said Scipio.

"How are that, Cap'n?" asked Porgy.

"The ammunition boxes are stored next to the bulkhead," said the Captain, "and, now I come to think of it, they're stowed log-cabin fashion, with timbers between them, so as to let the air get around them. I don't believe that anyone except a boy like this could crawl through. We'll be pretty lucky, too, if we don't cut our hole right against the end of a box."

"Then let's cut it high enough to be above them all," said Meredith.

"No," answered Porgy; "Johnny's idee was right. Ef we cut above 'em, any feller that comes down inter the hold'll see the hole."

"Come on, then," said the Captain; "let's go to work."

"Hold on a minute," exclaimed Johnny. "Can you remember how wide the boxes are Captain?"

"I didn't measure them," was the answer; "but I should say about two feet and a half. Why?"

"Well, it's this way," replied Johnny; "if the boxes are about two feet and a half wide and have timbers between them, I should think that by starting our hole about three feet from the vessel's side, we'd about hit the space between the first and second boxes."

"The boy's right!" declared the Captain. "I must have been thick-headed not to think of that myself. Let's start the hole three feet from the weather side."

And now began a slow and laborious piece of work, for the planks were tough, the chisel was dull, and they had only a block of wood to use as a mallet. Nevertheless progress was made, and after a long and trying struggle sections of three planks were cut out, and it was found that they had made the opening opposite a space between two boxes.

"We got to git another slice out," said Porgy; "that hole aren't big enough yet."

"Avast there, Porgy," said Johnny. "I don't believe you ever were a boy. That

hole's plenty big enough for me, and so here goes."

So saying, Johnny dropped down and began to push himself through the hole feet first, as every boy does in such a case, knowing that if he gets into a tight place he can return better if his head is toward the opening at which he entered. By "hunching up" his shoulders he was able to get them through the hole with a squeeze. He rested a moment and, looking up with a twinkle of fun in his eyes, said:

"All clear astern so far. Give me the block and chisel. Say, Mittykins, did you ever play at tunnelling when you were a boy? Well, this is tunnelling for business. Good-by. Whew! I smell rats!"

And Johnny disappeared in the impenetrable gloom of the hold, leaving his friends in keen anxiety in the forepeak. The boy wormed himself slowly backward between the two boxes. It was intensely dark, except for the faint glimmer of light that came from the hole in the bulkhead. But Johnny struggled along until his feet brought up suddenly against the side of a box laid directly across his tunnel. He paused in dismay.

"Here's a pretty pickle, as Porgy says," he

muttered to himself. "If I've reached the end of the tunnel, I'd like to know what I can do except to go back. Hold on, though. Let's feel around a little bit."

He moved his feet about in various directions and found that there was a passage between the end of his box and the one that his feet had struck.

"I wonder if I can get around that corner," he thought. "Anyhow I've got to try."

He pushed his body backward slowly, doubling up his knees till he was almost in a cramp. Then he slid his legs around into the new passage, and with the greatest difficulty got his body around the corner after them.

"I wonder if I can get back!" was the thought that now flashed through his mind.

Immediately he tried to do so, and found that it was considerably easier than going ahead—or rather astern. But now he had to go through the labor of forcing himself around the corner once more. When he had succeeded in doing so, he felt that he had bruised and barked his limbs in several places. But he must go on. Slowly and with much difficulty he pushed himself backward down the new passage, till his feet again struck a box.

"Another corner," he said.

Then came the painful bending and squeezing necessary to get himself around; but he knew better how to go about it now and did not tire himself as he had the first time.

"How frightfully dark it is!" he murmured, as he lay panting; "and how stuffy the air is."

The appalling gloom was too much for the boy's nerves for a few moments, and he closed his eyes and buried his face in his hands. He could feel the lurching and pitching of the brigantine, and his ears were filled with a thousand discordant creakings and gnawings as her timbers strained in her struggle with the wild sea. Above him, too, the boxes creaked and shrieked.

"Suppose the stowage isn't good, and one of the boxes falls in on me!"

That thought had barely flashed through his mind when there was a squeak and a whir and something rushed across his prostrate body.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed; "a rat!"

That little incident convinced him that it was poor policy to lie still, and he began his journey again; but in a few minutes he had to turn another corner.

"Good gracious!" he thought; "suppose I get lost! Wait, wait. How did I come?"

Once fore-and-aft, once athwart-ships, again fore-and-aft, and now athwart-ships again. I mustn't lose my reckoning, so that I can find my way back."

In a few moments Johnny mustered up courage to proceed in the impenetrable darkness. It seemed to him that his journey lasted for half a day, but it was not more than three-quarters of an hour before his feet went out of the end of a passage and met no obstacle.

"Hello!" he said, "I wonder if I've come to the end of it."

Eagerly he wormed his body backward and in a few seconds his head was out of the tunnel, and in the dim light of the hold he was able to see that he stood astern of all the pile of boxes. He had hardly made this cheering discovery when the main hatch was thrown open, a flood of light was let in, and someone began to descend. With feverish haste Johnny dropped on his breast and backed into the tunnel from which he had just emerged. He had barely concealed his head before Peter Black and three other men had assembled in the hold.

"The ammunition boxes are fo'wa'd," said Peter, "an' we got to climb over the whole pile."

"Come on, then," said one of the other men.

They climbed up the pile of boxes, Peter Black actually placing his foot within a dozen inches of Johnny's head. The boy now realized that he must lie quiet until the men went out of the hold again. This proved to be a long and trying task, for they had gone down there to get a box of powder and a box of bullets—metallic breech-loading cartridges not being in use then—and it was slow work. Nevertheless, in an hour they had completed their task and left the hold.

"Now," said Johnny, "as soon as I get used to the darkness again I can start."

In about ten minutes he was able to see clearly once more, and he began his climb over the pile of boxes. To his intense surprise and delight, he found that Peter and his men had removed two boxes almost directly above the last athwart-ships tunnel leading toward the hole. As these boxes had been on top of the lowermost layer, it was now possible for Johnny to drop down into his tunnel close to the hole. He at once forced the top from one of the boxes and found that it was filled with canisters of powder. Another box close by contained bullets. He searched a little while before he found caps. Taking a canister of powder in

his hands and one large box of caps in his pocket, he dropped down into the tunnel, and in a few minutes passed through the hole into the forepeak.

"Glory be!" exclaimed Porgy, exhaling a huge breath of relief; "he are in port again."

"It's all right!" exclaimed Johnny; "I've found the whole stock and here are some specimens."

"That looks like what we need," said Captain Sparks. "But have you found the muskets?"

"Yes, they're in the long boxes farther astern," replied Johnny. "But I can tell you it's going to be a fight. Your crew have got arms and ammunition, too."

"Never mind," said the Captain. "We'll whip them."

"Now," said Johnny. "I'm going back for more. Let Miss Mittykins come with me. I know the way now, and two can work more quickly than one."

"All right," said Miss Mittykins. "Heave ahead, Johnny." And the two boys went like eels, in single file, into the now shortened tunnel.

CHAPTER XXX

JOHNNY CONCEIVES A PLAN

THE boys were not able to indulge in much conversation as they wormed their way through the passage. But the journey was much shorter this time, and they were soon seated on the boxes, surveying the contents of the hold in the dim light.

"What in the world do you suppose your guardian intends to do with all this stock of arms and ammunition?" asked Miss Mittykins.

"Well, I've been puzzling myself about that," said Johnny. "I must say that it looks a little suspicious to me."

"Suspicious? How?"

"What's he doing so far South with this cargo?"

"Do you think that he meant to take it into a Southern port?"

"I'm afraid so," said Johnny; "but we haven't time to talk about that now. We must get at the arms and the other stuff."

"Yes, that's so," assented Miss Mittykins.

"And we must fasten the boxes up again," said Johnny, "so that if any of them come down to get anything they will not see that the boxes have been opened."

"It isn't likely that they'll come down again, is it? They must have all they need up there."

"That's true," said Johnny; "but you never can tell what that sort of fellows will do."

"Especially if they should break out one or two bottles of whiskey too many."

The two boys now set to work in earnest at opening a box of muskets. They proceeded slowly and with caution, being anxious to avoid breaking the lid.

"Whew!" exclaimed Miss Mittykins, "those are good guns."

"Yes," said Johnny, "but the trouble is that those scoundrels up above have guns just as good."

"Look here," said Miss Mittykins; "after we get these guns what are we going to do? I don't see my way out of this thing yet."

"I have a plan," said Johnny; "but we must consult Porgy and the others about it."

"What is it?"

"Never mind now. Let's get our arsenal stocked. And say, Mittykins, I have an idea."

"Let's hear it."

"I think it would be a pretty good scheme for us to have two muskets each."

"Good! and have them both loaded, eh?"

"Yes, that'll give us two shots to their one. I'm sure they haven't thought of anything of that kind. And besides, they are not expecting anything from us."

The boys now got out the required number of muskets and screwed down the lid of the box once more. Johnny crawled into the tunnel again and Miss Mittykins passed the muskets to him. With considerable difficulty Johnny propelled himself and two muskets to the opening and called, in a low tone:

"Stand by there."

"Aye, aye," came the answer, in Meredith's voice.

Johnny passed the muskets through, and as Meredith received the last one, he said:

"Say, Johnny, you've given me twice as many as we need."

"I have a plan for using them all," answered Johnny; "I'll explain it to you afterward."

The boy now returned to Miss Mittykins and the two set to work to get a store of ammunition into the forepeak. When that had been accomplished, Johnny said:

"I wonder if there are any pistols and cutlasses in the cargo."

"Let's ask the Captain."

Another journey to the opening in the bulkhead and a minute's conversation put Johnny in possession of the information that there were pistols and cutlasses.

"Now," said Johnny, "we'll just loosen the lids on the boxes that contain them."

"Why not get them out?"

"Well, if my plan is agreeable to the rest, I think they will answer our purpose right here as well as they will anywhere else, and perhaps a little better."

Miss Mittykins looked at Johnny with growing surprise and admiration. The boy was rapidly developing a firmness and a swiftness of decision that caused his companion to say to himself: "He'll make a good officer some day."

"Now," said Johnny, when their task was completed, "let's take a look around us and see if we have left anything that ought to be attended to."

As he stood on the pile of boxes, scratching his head and gazing anxiously around the dimly lighted hold, the boy was anything but a heroic figure, but Miss Mittykins could not help admiring him.

"Yes," he said, as if talking to himself, "there is one thing more to do."

He ascended the ladder to the main hatch and carefully examined the cover. He put up his hand and gave it a gentle push upward.

"Good!" he exclaimed in a whisper.

"What are you at up there?" inquired Miss Mittykins in a guarded tone.

"You'll see, if my plan is accepted—and I think it will be. Why, those fellows must be stricken with insanity, or else they think we're a lot of lunatics."

"It's more likely that they are all drunk," said Miss Mittykins.

"Well, I think they'll get sober in a great hurry when they see——. Never mind; come on."

And, chuckling with amusement at his own thoughts, Johnny started toward the tunnel once more. In a few minutes he was seated among his friends in the forepeak.

"Wal," said Porgy, "we are got guns an' ammynition 'nuff fur a siege, but nobody don't seem to be in no werry great hurry fur to siege us."

"Den we go on de deck an' blow 'em inter de sea!" exclaimed Scipio.

"They are well armed," said Johnny.

"An' the fust head wot showed itself out o' the hatch would get an extra hole into it werry sudden," said Porgy.

"Well, well," said the Captain, impatiently, "what are we going to do?"

"We might wait till night," said Mr. Brewer, "and steal on deck in the cover of darkness."

"Yes," said the Captain, "that might work. It would give us a chance to make an even fight."

"Why don't you speak up, Johnny?" asked Miss Mittykins, impatiently. "You told me you had a plan."

"I thought some one else might have a better one," said the boy, modestly.

"Wal," said Porgy, "some one else don't seem to have no plan at all, so I reckon as how you'd better heave ahead an' let's hear yours."

In a low tone, as if he were afraid that the wooden walls of the brigantine might have ears, the boy unfolded the details of his simple plan, while his companions crowded around him and listened with increasing interest and approval depicted upon their earnest faces.

"My dear young friend," said Mr. Durand, "it seems to me to be a hazardous enterprise."

"We'll take the hazard," said the Captain,

shortly; "you can hide. Young man, you've got a head on your shoulders. Don't you think it'll work, Mr. Brewer?"

"It looks feasible," answered Johnny's guardian, "and I think we must try it."

"It are a reg'lar do!" exclaimed Porgy. "Only we'd best wait till dusk, so they can't tell who it are that are comin' on deck. An' now let's cut the hole bigger an' move one or two o' them boxes away from it."

What our friends had thought to be a gale was only a squall, and as the twilight of that day faded away into the luminous dusk of a summer evening on the coast of the United States, the brigantine was slipping gently along at a six-knot gait under all plain sail. The man at the wheel was luxuriously sitting in a chair taken from the cabin, and was enjoying one of Mr. Brewer's cigars. There was no lookout forward, but two of the crew lounged against the rail in the waist of the vessel. The mate walked up and down near the taffrail, and the remainder of the crew were in the cabin. At this moment a thin blue streak of smoke stole slowly out of the fore-hatch and wavered upward. In an another minute it had widened into a column and turned brown. The man at the wheel stared

at it breathlessly, rubbed his eyes, and turned pale. At the same instant some one began to pound furiously on the under side of the fore-castle deck and a muffled voice shouted that most appalling of all cries at sea:

“Fire! Fire! Fire!”

CHAPTER XXXI

HOW JOHNNY'S PLAN DEVELOPED

IN an instant the deck of the vessel was in an uproar. The two men lounging in the waist sprang forward repeating the wild cry of "Fire! Fire!" Peter Black ceased his leisurely walk up and down the quarter-deck and bawled down into the cabin :

"All hands! There's a fire forrad!"

Jared Lure and the others came tumbling up with blanched faces.

"Them fellers down there'll be smothered!" exclaimed one.

"Wot's that to you?" demanded Jared, with an oath. "Get buckets an' blankets an' jump below with me to smother the fire."

The men dashed about in wild haste to obey the order. In the meantime the smoke from the forehatch was growing browner and oilier in appearance, and the two hands who had hastened forward recoiled in dismay.

"Fire! Fire!" cried the muffled voice down

in the forecastle, and then it faded away in a faint, choking moan.

"They're a-suffocatin' down there!" cried one of the mutineers.

"You two fellers get your guns an' stan' by to shoot the fust one o' them that tries to come on deck," ordered Jared. "You others foller me."

Jared Lure was not deficient in physical courage and it was the men's unconscious recognition of this fact that had given him his hold upon them. So when he threw open the cover of the fore hatch they uttered a cheer. But even Jared staggered backward before the great cloud of choking smoke that swirled up into the air.

"Wonder they didn't wait till they was dead afore they hollered," he muttered. "Wait a minute; that was bottled up smoke an' it'll be thinner directly."

Jared's judgment proved to be correct, and in a few seconds the volume of smoke sensibly diminished, though there was still sufficient of it to be thoroughly alarming.

"Come on now," cried Jared. "Peter, keep her as she goes."

"Aye, aye," came the response from aft.

Jared and his followers dropped down into the forecastle, where they were quite unable to see anything in the darkness.

"Blow the luck!" shouted Jared; "why didn't some o' ye fetch a lantern? Git one, quick, somebody!"

Several more precious minutes were lost in procuring a lantern, and then a hasty glance around the place showed Jared that the fire was not there.

"Why, it's down in the forepeak!" he cried. "An' hello, wot's this? A hole! Them fellers has got down there an' sot the brigantine afire!"

A storm of groans and curses broke out at this announcement.

"Come on!" cried Jared. "Some of us must jump down there, or the fire'll be gettin' at the powder."

Pale faces turned paler at these words, but two of the most resolute of the men followed their chosen leader through the hole in the deck. Miss Mittykins was lying flat on his breast just behind the bulkhead that separated the forepeak from the hold. Through the hole which had been cut he looked and saw Jared descend from the forecastle. The next instant he sprang to his feet and dashed toward the main hatch. Beneath it were assembled all our friends, with their arms and ammunition.

"They're down!" exclaimed Miss Mittykins, in an intense whisper.

"My dear friends!" exclaimed Mr. Durand, in tones of trepidation; "wait a moment. Some of them may still be on the deck."

"If you're afraid to go up, stay below!" exclaimed Captain Sparks. "Now for it, my lads; follow close!"

With those words the Captain, assisted by Porgy, hurled back the cover of the main hatch and sprang on deck.

"Wot!" yelled Peter, mistaking them in the darkness for Jared and his companions, "are she burnt through the hulkhead?"

"It are putty sure that somethin's burnt through," said Porgy, with a chuckle.

"And that am we," cried Scipio.

While these words were on their lips, Porgy, Scipio, and the Captain were making their way aft, according to the plan previously arranged.

"Throw up your hands!" shouted the Captain, as he approached Peter Black.

"Who the blazes are you?" cried Peter, still unable to make out the face in the growing darkness.

"I'll show you!" cried Captain Sparks.

With these words he swung his musket around his head and aimed a crushing blow at the mutineer. But Peter sprang nimbly aside and drew from his belt a formidable looking

knife. At the same instant he shouted, in a hoarse voice :

“Forrad there ! The prisoners is out ! Lay aft !”

“We’re out, and we’re out to stay,” said the Captain. “Drop that knife, or I’ll blow your head off.”

He levelled his musket, the muzzle of it almost touching Peter’s face.

“You’ve got the best of it,” muttered the mutineer, sullenly throwing his knife upon the deck.

The Captain immediately bound him hand and foot and lashed him to the vessel’s rail. Then he turned to see how the contest was moving elsewhere. Porgy and Scipio had been told off to capture the wheel, and they had made a dash for it as soon as they reached the deck. But the man at the wheel had recovered his wits, and, dropping the spokes, he jumped for his musket. Seizing it with a haste that prevented anything like an aim, he fired it at Scipio. The flash of the powder almost scorched the negro’s hair and the bullet shrieked past his ear. With a yell of rage, Scipio, throwing away his musket and abandoning himself to the savage instincts that still dwelt in his nature, hurled his powerful frame upon the

mutineer and together they fell to the deck. The helmsman had a knife in his girdle and vainly he strove to draw it and end a conflict which he felt must otherwise end in defeat for himself; but Scipio pinioned his arms and wormed him toward the brigantine's rail. Porgy in the meantime was dancing around the writhing contestants, looking for an opportunity to administer a finishing blow with the butt of his musket. But so rapidly did the two men roll about the deck that he dared not strike lest he should injure his friend instead of the enemy.

"Let um be, Porgy!" yelled Scipio, who saw his companion's anxiety; "I trow um in the sea!"

Writhing with his opponent to the lee rail, the negro, with a final burst of his herculean strength, staggered to his feet, dragging the mutineer with him. Then he lifted the fellow clear off the deck and dashed him backward against the rail with such violence that the man almost swooned.

"Ha, ha!" screamed Scipio; "you feed de shawk now!" He was in the act of lifting the mutineer's legs and toppling him backward into the ocean, when the Captain, who had ended his own contest with Peter, interposed.



TOGETHER THEY FELL TO THE DECK.

"Don't, Scipio," he said. "Don't take a life needlessly. Make him fast."

Accustomed to obedience to his superior officers, the negro unwillingly suspended his operation, and with a mumbled "aye, aye, sah," passed a line about the mutineer's body and limbs in such a manner as to make him perfectly helpless. In the meantime, the wheel having been deserted, the brigantine had slowly come up into the wind, and this fact was made known by a great slatting and thundering of canvas aloft.

"To the helm there, Porgy," cried the Captain; "hard up with it before she loses her way!"

The movement was none too quick, for the vessel had almost come to a stop. However, her head gradually fell off and in a few minutes she gathered way on her former course. Scipio now jumped to the wheel, while the Captain and Porgy dashed forward. Mr. Brewer, Morton, Meredith, Mittykins, Johnny, and the rest had been allotted duties forward. Their first work was to close and secure the fore and main hatches, in order to hold Jared and his companions as prisoners below. For this special duty the boys had been told off, two to each hatch, while the men were to engage any

of the mutinous crew that might be on deck. So at the instant when the Captain, Porgy, and Scipio were hurrying aft, Johnny and Miss Mittykins rushed to the fore hatch and closed it with a bang.

"There," said Johnny, triumphantly, "those fellows can put out my smoky oakum fire at their leisure now."

From which it will be understood that the fire was a mere trap. Meredith and Morton secured the main hatch and then uttered a cheer of victory. Their rejoicing was, however, premature. The two men who had been lounging in the waist had now secured their muskets. Finding that they could not intercept Johnny and Miss Mittykins, they levelled their pieces and fired. The next instant the two boys returned the fire, and almost simultaneously Meredith and Morton fired at the two men. The two mutineers fell to the deck without a sound, both shot through the body.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" cried the crew.

"And my little plan was—was——"

Johnny's voice broke into a quick, sobbing gasp; he staggered back a step, and then fell heavily to the deck.

"He's wounded!" cried Mr. Brewer; "the poor boy is wounded!"

CHAPTER XXXII

ALL BACK AT SANCET

THREE days later the brigantine was on an easy bowline with her starboard tacks aboard and her jibboom pointing toward the safe waters under the muzzles of Fort Monroe. Johnny was sitting in a big chair on the deck, near the taffrail, absorbing the juice of an orange and enjoying the cool breeze that swept across the vessel and filled her creamy canvas. His left arm was in a sling. His wound had fortunately proved to be only superficial, and he had fainted from the shock and the reaction after the excitement of the fight. His plan of recapturing the vessel had proved to be an entire success. The two men—Peter Black and the helmsman—who had been overcome on the after deck had submitted to the authority of the Captain again, now that they found themselves outnumbered, and were doing their share toward working the little vessel into port. Jared Lure and the others were still prisoners in the forecastle, and the loyal crew

was living aft. It was a strange and altogether unusual arrangement, but, owing to the habits of discipline that prevailed among the naval sailors, Captain Sparks had no reason to complain of any lack of respect on the part of his men. Porgy was serving as mate and was bearing his new honors with becoming modesty, though not without frequent references to the "widder."

Mr. Brewer was moody and silent most of the time, for his expedition had proved thus far to be a failure and he was literally at sea, without a home and with a cargo of arms and ammunition on his hands. Johnny understood his guardian's feelings and reflected long and earnestly as to the course he ought to pursue. The more he thought about it, the more he was convinced that it was to be his duty to persuade Mr. Brewer to return to Sancet, and to show him how he could do it with honor. So when his guardian approached him in the afternoon, Johnny said:

"Mr. Brewer, what are you going to do with the cargo of this brigantine?"

The man started, flushed, and was about to turn away, but the boy detained him.

"Don't you see that luck's been against you in this matter ever since the start?"

"What do you mean, boy?" demanded Mr. Brewer, in a husky tone.

"I mean that I have guessed what you intended to do with these guns and other things."

For a moment or two Mr. Brewer was silent, and then he said, very shortly:

"Well, I can't do it now, at any rate."

"No," said Johnny, "but you can do something a good deal better."

"What is it?"

"When we arrive at Fort Monroe, run up the flag of the Union, call all hands to give three cheers, and make a present of this cargo to the Federal Government."

Johnny's eyes flashed with enthusiasm, and Mr. Brewer regarded him with surprise.

"Why, it would ruin me!" he exclaimed.

"Don't you believe it," replied Johnny, with great earnestness. "No one in Sancet need know that you did not start out for that very purpose, and you could go back there and be the most popular man in town."

Mr. Brewer took a turn across the deck and then gazed intently at Johnny.

"You would betray me," he said.

"Why? On account of the money? I guess you are going to make that all right, Mr. Brewer."

There was another minute's hesitation, and then the man stretched out his hand, which the boy wrung heartily.

"Johnny," said Mr. Brewer, "I've been a dishonest man; but I'll do the right thing by you; I will, indeed."

"May I tell Porgy?"

"Of course, and let him tell the crew. I'll tell the Captain."

The news quickly spread through the little vessel, and when the musical voice of Miss Mittykins floated down from the foretop with the cheering words, "Land ho!" the whole crew gave three hearty cheers for Mr. Brewer. In the first dog-watch the brigantine sailed slowly up to her anchorage, and as she approached it, Porgy, leaping three feet from the deck, cried:

"By the great hook-block! Look yonder!"

And they all saw, riding safely on the smooth blue waters, the good ship Mohawk. The brigantine anchored within hail of her and our friends lined the rail and cheered her with wild enthusiasm. The quartermaster on watch was seen to level his glass and then hastily report something to the officer of the deck. The next moment Porgy and his companions heard the piping of the boatswain's mate's whistle and his hoarse voice bawled:

“Away, third cutter!”

Ten minutes later Ensign Truxton was on the deck of the brigantine, listening to the story of the Mohawk's men. Mr. Drake and his crew had arrived safely, having been picked up by a steamer and carried to Philadelphia, but Porgy's boat and its crew had been given up for lost.

“You have done well, Lynn,” said Mr. Truxton, “and the Captain will be well pleased.”

And Porgy said he had not been so happy since the “widder” took him to the circus. After a conference with Captain Barker, Mr. Truxton returned with an armed guard and took the mutineers ashore, to be turned over to the civil authorities. Mr. Brewer went ashore in the same boat, and returned with the cheering news that he had made arrangements for the delivery of the arms and ammunition to the commandant of the fort. He and Captain Sparks dined aboard the Mohawk that evening, and when they came back they told our friends that Captain Barker had promised to procure leaves of absence for them all, and that, as the Mohawk was to go into the dock for repairs to her hull, they would all be allowed to sail with the brigantine to Sancet, where Johnny would remain till he was fit for duty again. Mean-

while, Mr. Durand had been hard at work on a letter, which duly appeared in the *Sancet Weekly Chronicle and Journal of Civilization*. A part of it read thus:

“The enlightened and patriotic people of Sancet will rejoice to know that their esteemed fellow-townsmen, Mr. Hiram Brewer, accompanied by Mr. Durand, formerly head-master of the famous Tuzo School, has arrived at Fort Monroe with his brigantine, and presented her cargo of arms and ammunition to the commandant of that historic Union stronghold. Mr. Brewer has with him his son, Morton Brewer, and his ward, John Rodgers, who was supposed to have been drowned off Sancet. Both of these young men were picked up at sea in an open boat, and were instrumental in saving the brigantine from a mutinous crew. The whole story is romantic and absorbing.”

Mr. Durand then proceeded to narrate, in some two columns and a half, the adventures of the two boys and the fortunes of the brigantine. When the good people of Sancet read this remarkable story, they experienced a total change of heart. They decided that in Mr. Brewer and Mr. Durand they had been entertaining angels unawares, while they voted Johnny Rodgers to be a thorough hero. So they set

about preparing for their celebrities such a reception as the town had never before seen.

The brigantine, in the meantime, got under way from Hampton Roads in a blaze of fine weather and was convoyed as far as the mouth of the Delaware by a grim-looking, double-turreted monitor with a six-syllabled Indian name. The Mohawk's crew manned the rigging and cheered her as she sailed away, and the band at the Fort played "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean." Fair winds and smooth seas made it an easy sail of three days and a half to Sancet, and consequently, on the morning of the fourth day, the brigantine entered the harbor and dropped her anchor.

"W'y," exclaimed Porgy, looking hard at the little town, "they're smothered in flags."

It was, indeed, true. Flags were flying in every direction, and the shores were lined with excited people, whose cheers floated bravely across the waters. As soon as the brigantine came to anchor the militia began firing a salute of twenty-one guns from an old brass twelve-pounder, and the Sancet Fife and Drum Corps played "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow." A boat rowed off to the vessel, conveying the chief men of the village and the Congressman representing the district. Our friends were

welcomed most heartily, and were persuaded to go at once to the shore, where the celebration would begin. Up the main street of San-cet, escorted by the band and the militia company, they marched to the town hall, where the formal speeches were made. Mr. Brewer's eyes and mouth opened to their fullest extent when he heard what a great and good man he was, and as for Johnny, he had to hide his face, while Porgy almost danced with joy. The Congressman made the principal speech, following two of the townsmen, and he aroused the greatest enthusiasm of the day. He said, at the conclusion of his remarks:

"John Rodgers, stand forward."

Johnny, with his arm still in a sling, wonderingly obeyed.

"My young friend," said the Congressman, "you have begun your career in the Navy in a splendid manner; but it is altogether unfitting that you should continue it as an apprentice. It therefore gives me the greatest pleasure to announce that I have purchased your discharge and that I have formally appointed you a cadet at the Naval Academy."

A storm of cheers almost brought the plaster off the ceiling, and Johnny was speechless with emotion. The crowd shouted, "Speech!

Speech!" but the poor boy wiped his streaming eyes and shook his head. Still the audience shouted, but there was a sudden silence, when the sinuous figure of Miss Mittykins advanced to the front of the platform. The boy looked affectionately at Johnny, and then, lifting up his clear, young voice, sang the memorable song of Mlle. de Calaveras, "Little Car-dee." At its conclusion, another storm of applause filled the house, and then some bright fellow at the rear of the room set up a cry for "Porgy Lynn," for his name had been frequent in Mr. Durand's story. The crowd took up the cry, and finally Johnny seized Porgy by the hand and led him forward. The bronzed seaman looked about him doubtfully, and then said:

"Mr. Speaker, an' Mr. Brewer, an' Johnny, an' everybody; I ain't no speechifyer, not gin'rally havin' wery much fur ter say 'cept 'Aye, aye, sir,' or 'Land ho,' or 'By the mark ten,' or some other sich salt lingo. But I'd like to say on this suspigious occasion, as the widder would 'a' called it, that the school-master's log o' Johnny Rodgers's fust v'yage aint laid it on none too thick, w'ich I'm pussonally a witness to. An' sence it are settled now that he are a-goin' to be a ossifer, I reckon that all on us, in-

cludin' Scipio Africanus, don't ask fur nothin' better than to stay right in the sarvice till we gets a chance to sarve under him, fur we guesses he'll make a right smart ossifer. 'Cos w'y? Wal, as the widder used ter say, leddies an' gemmen, the housekeeper can't boss the cook 'less she knows how to cook herself. So there ye are, an' with my best respecks, here's wishin' you all long life and happiness."

Porgy scraped a low bow and stepped back. Johnny seized him by the hand, but the other Mohawk sailors crowded around and raised the boy on their shoulders, where he dimly saw a forest of waving arms and heard the roar of many voices.

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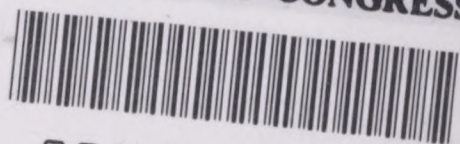
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